THE

SECOND PART

OF THE

Chriſtian Oratory:

OR, THE

Extraordinary Devotion

OF THE

CLOSET

DISPLAY'D.

By the late Reverend and Learned

Mr. *BENJAMIN BENNET.*

Publiſh'd from his own Manuſcripts,

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BRITISH MUSEUM

To the READER.

THE following Diſcourſes have ſo direct a Tendency, and are ſo well fitted to promote Practical Religion and Piety, that I have Reaſon to hope I have not taken uſeleſs Pains to recover them from the Obſcurity, wherein the Pious and Worthy Author left them, being wrote by him in a Character peculiar to himſelf.

The *Chriſtian Oratory* met with ſuch kind Acceptance among ſerious devout Chriſtians, that he was encouraged to think of purſuing the Deſign he had intimated to the World, of publiſhing a Second Part, diſplaying the extraordinary Work of the Cloſet. But though I know the Scheme was laid, and ſome Materials were ready for throwing into Form, yet he had not ſo much as begun to prepare the Work for the Preſs, when it pleaſed God to diſcharge him from that Service, and to call him from aſſiſting the Devotion of good Perſons in this World,

to attend the more extraordinary Employments of the heavenly State: From the Work of the *Oratory* here below, to that of the *Temple* above.

If he had lived to finiſh what he intended on this Subject, I am perſuaded, all that knew him, or have been converſant in his excellent Book upon it, will believe it would have been a valuable Performance, and exceeding uſeful in the Church of Chriſt. The ſuperior Talents of his Mind, together with the Devotion of his Temper, qualified him for doing as good Service, as moſt Men, to Religion by his Writings. And the World might have expected to have been much the better for his Labours, if divine Providence had continued him a while longer in it. As it is, I ſhall endeavour to preſerve what I can of them, and at preſent, offer theſe few practical Diſcourſes to the Publick, promiſing myſelf, that though they want his finiſhing Hand, they will be found not unworthy of him.

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The two firſt, concerning a ſecret Faſt and Thankſgiving, I call the ſecond Part of the *Chriſtian Oratory*, being all that Mr. *Benner* had done towards it, ſo far as I can find. And I cannot forbear telling the World upon this Occaſion, that the Rules there delivered were tranſcribed from his own Practice, as is very evident from his Diary, where it appears that he himſelf kept Days of Faſting and Thankſgiving in ſecret, in the Manner he recommends to others, uſually every Month, and ſometimes more frequently. And he records there, with a manifeſt Satisfaction, the like Practice of good Mr. *Troſſe* of *Exeter*, who " kept " a ſecret Faſt every Month, when " he roſe at *Five*, continued on his " Knees till *Eight*; and again, from " *Ten* till *Twelve*; then he walked " an Hour in his Chamber; at *One* " he betook himſelf to his Knees " again, from which he never roſe " till about *Six*. He ſpent *Eleven* " Hours in Prayer and Meditation

" on

" on ſuch Days, and would ſay, his " faſting Days were better to him " than his feaſting Days." And as this was very agreeable to Mr. *Bennet*'s ordinary Courſe, ſo his Taſte and Experience of the Benefit and Pleaſure thereof, was alſo very much the ſame; for he ſometimes makes ſuch Reflections as theſe at the Concluſion of thoſe Solemnities; *No Comforts like thoſe of Religion; I find it a great deal better to have my Mind warm'd and enlivened by ſerious Prayer, than by any other Means.*

How far the Chriſtians of our Day will be influenced by, or think themſelves concerned in ſuch Examples and Teſtimonies, I cannot tell. But certainly it ſhould at leaſt procure Attention, and ſome Regard to what our Author has ſaid upon this Subject, to conſider that he himſelf was a Pattern of that extraordinary Devotion he preſcribed to other Perſons, and conſequently had a real prevailing Senſe of the Neceſſity, Importance and Uſefulneſs thereof.

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To the READER.

I have annex'd a ſhort Diſcourſe of *Ejaculatory Prayer*, another of *joining in publick Prayer*, becauſe they have ſome Affinity with the foregoing Subject, and were immediately connected therewith by the Author from the Pulpit. And as they are full of the ſame true Spirit of Piety and Devotion, they may, by the Bleſſing of God, be of equal Uſe and Advantage to the ſerious Reader.

The other Sermons that follow in this Collection, I think, very well deſerve to ſee the Light, which is all the Reaſon I need to give for printing them; tho' I can alſo add, that ſome of them are mentioned in a Liſt I have ſeen of what Mr. *Bennet* himſelf deſign'd for the Preſs after a previous Review.

The Diſcourſes upon *Chriſtian Charity*, with which this Book concludes, have an excellent and noble Subject, and I preſume it will not be thought to ſuffer much on the Account of the Management of it. I have here taken the Liberty to divide into Chapters,

ters, what I could not ſo conveniently publiſh in the Form of Sermons, wherein it was delivered. The whole Performance breathes a Divine and truly Chriſtian Spirit, and will do good Service to Mankind, to Religion, and the Church of Chriſt, if it can contribute any Thing towards propagating it in the World.

I do not think any further Recommendation of theſe Diſcourſes neceſſary, but ſhall leave them to ſpeak for themſelves; only I deſire it may be remembred they are poſthumous, and claim the favourable Allowances that are uſual in this Caſe; yet notwithſtanding the Diſadvantage under which they come abroad, I am perſuaded it will be the Reader's Fault, if they are not very uſeful to him. I ſhall therefore add no more, than that it is my ſincere and hearty Prayer that the good Ends they are ſo capable of ſubſerving may be promoted by them.

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L. Latham.

MATTH. vi. 17, 18.

But thou, when thou faſteſt, ***anoint thy Head, and waſh thy Face:***
That thou appear not unto Men to faſt, ***but unto thy Father which is in ſecret; and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly.***

I HAVE been ſetting before you in ſeveral Diſcourſes from another Subject, The Duty and Work of *the Chriſtian Oratory*; which I told you muſt be conſidered, either *as ſtated and ordinary*, or *occaſional and extraordinary*; the former of theſe hath been diſpatched, I now proceed to the other, *viz. the extraordinary, occaſional Employment and Duty of the Cloſet*, which properly belongs to a private or ſecret Faſt.

Beſides daily Converſe with God in Retirement *by Reading, Meditation, and Prayer*, and the like Exerciſes of Religion; the Circumſtances of moſt Chriſtians will make it neceſſary now and then to have more *ſolemn Interviews* with him, to ſet ſome time apart for reviſing their Work, examining their State and Ways, and fixing Meaſures of holy living: And this is what I am now to recommend to you, and I ſhall endeavour to aſſiſt you in the Management of your Work on ſuch Occaſions in the beſt manner I can.

This Chapter is part of our bleſſed Lord's admirable Sermon on the Mount, wherein he taxes

the Pride, Vanity, and Hypocriſy of the *Phariſees* in ſeveral Inſtances: He begins with their giving Alms, and cautions his Followers againſt Oſtentation therein. *Take heed ye do not your Alms before Men* (ſays he in the firſt Verſe) *to be ſeen of them, otherwiſe ye have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven.* In Verſe the ſecond, *Therefore when thou doſt thine Alms, do not ſound a Trumpet before thee as the Hypocrites do in the Synagogues and in the Streets, that they may have Glory of Men.* They gave their Charity as publickly as they could, affected to do it in the open Streets; and the more the Witneſſes of it, the better they were pleaſed. And ſome have thought that they really ſounded a Trumpet upon the ſet Days of diſtributing their Charity, to proclaim it to the World, that *Rabbi* ſuch a one was now to give Alms: This our Lord juſtly reproves as vainglorious and ſavouring of Hypocriſy; and in oppoſition thereto, he recommends a more private, ſecret way of Charity, (verſes 3, 4.) as what will be ſure to meet with a publick and glorious Recompence from God hereafter.

From the fifth Verſe to the fifteenth he cenſures the Hypocriſy of the *Phariſees* in Prayer, and preſcribes Rules to his Diſciples touching the Performance of that Duty. And in the 16, 17, 18 Verſes he doth the ſame with Reference to Faſting; he firſt cautions them not to imitate thoſe Hypocrites, *ver.* 16. *Moreover when ye faſt, be not as the Hypocrites of a ſad Countenance, for they diſfigure their Faces, that they may appear unto Men to faſt: Verily I ſay unto you they have their Reward.* They took care to ſound their Trumpet, (in the metaphorical Senſe at leaſt) when they faſted, as well as when they gave Alms: They acted all upon the open Stage; by their Countenances, Dreſs and out-

outward Guiſe of Sorrow, proclaiming that Devotion, which ſhould have been carried on between God and themſelves in an abſolute Retirement and Secrecy.

And this they did the better to inſinuate themſelves into the Eſteem of the People, and produce in them an Opinion of their extraordinary Sanctity and Holineſs: Popular Applauſe was their End, and it was alſo their Reward; *all their Reward*, as our Saviour tells thoſe he ſpoke to.

But, ſays he to his Diſciples and Followers, *be not ye as theſe Hypocrites*; don't ye act like theſe Diſſemblers; and then he ſubjoins in the Words of the Text, *But thou, when thou faſteſt, anoint thy Head, and waſh thy Face, that thou appear not unto Men to faſt, but unto thy Father which is in ſecret; and thy Father*, &c.

I muſt here obſerve, that our Lord ſpeaks not in theſe Words of a *publick Faſt*; for then there certainly may be, and indeed ought to be outward Tokens of inward Humiliation; but of a *ſecret Faſt*, which every one is ſuppoſed to keep by himſelf alone; in which Caſe we ſhould endeavour ſtudiouſly to conceal the Matter as far as we can from the Notice and Obſervation of other Perſons; neither our Dreſs, nor our Looks ſhould diſcover what we have been about, much leſs ſhould we ſeek by this or the other means to diſcover it; we ſhould rather contrive and take Meaſures to hide it; which may be intended by that Expreſſion, *When thou faſteſt, anoint thy Head, and waſh thy Face, that thou appear not to Men to faſt.* Not that he enjoins an *actual anointing*, which was a Symbol of Joy, and uſed upon occaſion of their greateſt Feſtivals; but he ſignifies to them by the Words, that they ſhould rather appear in the Habit of Rejoicers than in that of

Mourners, when their Faſt was ſecret, and their Humiliation perſonal and private.

It may perhaps be asked here, Is it proper to keep *a ſecret Faſt*, when others are like to know it; as for Inſtance, the reſt of the Members of the ſame Family?

To which Queſtion I anſwer, we ſhould endeavour to conceal ſuch a Faſt from them, if it can decently be done; and oftentimes no doubt ways may be found of doing it: But we need not be ſo ſcrupulous in this Particular, as therefore to forbear the Duty, becauſe others are like to ſuſpect or know it: Conceal it, if you can, and as far as you can; but if you cannot conceal it, don't neglect it on that Account.

There is a great deal of Difference between *Faſting* that *we may appear* to Men to *faſt*, faſting for that very Purpoſe, or at leaſt with this Deſign, that others may take Notice of it; and *faſting even tho' it ſhould appear* unto Men, when this is what we don't chuſe, don't deſire, and would, if we were able, prevent.

The Words of my Text are a ſacred *Rubrick*, or *Directory* concerning the Celebration of a ſecret Faſt; and in them we have to obſerve

1. A Suppoſition, that the Diſciples of Chriſt would faſt. Our Lord did not here command the Duty, or inſtitute it afreſh; it had been an ancient Practice in the Church: The Diſciples of *John* faſted often, and our bleſſed Saviour afterwards took Notice that his Diſciples would faſt too: *Thou, when thou faſteſt*, ſays he, allowing what the *Phariſees* did, and others had been uſed to do, and expecting that his own Followers would do the like.

2. We have a Preſcription touching the Manner of a Faſt; it muſt be kept ſecret according to the

the Nature of ſuch a devout Exerciſe; not divulg'd, not proclaim'd to others; and then we are told it muſt be unto God, *That thou appear not unto Men to faſt, but unto thy Father which is in ſecret*, ſays the Text, *i. e.* it muſt be undertaken and managed with a ſingle Eye to God, as in his Preſence alone, reſting in his Approbation and Favour only, and with the ſole View of approving ourſelves to him: Then

3. We have the Encouragement there is thus to faſt, *thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly.* Tho' ye want the Applauſe of Men, their Praiſe and Encomiums, God will take favourable Notice of you, and at laſt publickly acknowledge and reward all your ſecret retir'd Devotion. He bottles up your Tears, writes down your Sighs and Groans, and will hereafter produce all to your everlaſting Honour and Comfort before Angels and Men.

Having thus explain'd the Words, I ſhall lay down this Propoſition as the nearer Subject of the Diſcourſe I intend upon them, *viz.* That it is a ſtanding Duty in the Church, and what our bleſſed Lord expects all his Diſciples ſhould be exerciſed in, to faſt in ſecret, to keep a ſecret Faſt in their *Oratories* or Cloſets.

In conſidering which Subject, I ſhall obſerve the following Method:

1. I ſhall make a Remark or two concerning a Faſt in general.

2. I ſhall ſet before you ſome of the more common and proper Ends or Reaſons of the Duty.

3. I ſhall endeavour to recommend the Practice of it to you; and then

4. Shew you what the Work and Buſineſs of a ſecret Faſt is, and how to manage ſuch a Solemnity.

1ſt, I ſhall make a Remark or two concerning a Faſt in general, give you ſome ſhort and tranſient Account of the Nature and Circumſtances of it, which I ſhall do in a few Propoſitions, as

1. That Abſtinence from Meat and Drink is the leſs principal Part of a Faſt, and not abſolutely eſſential to it. The Denomination indeed is taken from hence; becauſe on ſuch Occaſions it is uſual and very proper to abſtain from our ordinary Food, we therefore call theſe Seaſons Faſt-days: But ſtrictly, a Faſt-day in the Scripture, and higher Senſe of the Word, is a Day of ſolemn and extraordinary Devotion; of extraordinary Prayer, Confeſſion, and Humiliation, and the like ſpiritual Exerciſes: Abſtinence from Food is but accidental to it, and not in itſelf of any Value with God. He accounts no Man the better, purely becauſe his Stomach is empty, (as one judiciouſly remarks;) nor indeed can he be pleaſed with any Severities uſed towards the Body, if nothing farther be aim'd at.

I may here apply that of the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* viii. 8. *Meat commendeth us not to God, for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither if we eat not, are we the worſe.* Eating or not eating is in itſelf a thing perfectly indifferent, and of no manner of account with God, unleſs referred to an higher End, and made to ſerve ſome higher Purpoſes.

As merely to reſt is not to ſanctify a Sabbath, ſo to abſtain from Meat is not to keep a Faſt to the Lord, ſuch a Faſt as he has choſen: So that you ſhould have a care of placing too much in theſe external Circumſtances; have a care of reſting in the *Opus operatum* of a Faſt, or in abſtaining from bodily Supports: You may in this Senſe faſt, and yet not do it in a religious manner;

ner; as on the other Hand, I queſtion not but you may break your Faſt and be accepted of God, if the Weakneſs or the Indiſpoſition of the Body be ſuch, that you can't carry on the Work of the Day without taking ſome Refreſhment: In this Matter you are to manage your ſelf ſo as may beſt ſerve the great End and Deſign of this Solemnity.

And yet it muſt be own'd, that Abſtinence from Meat and Drink, and the common Refreſhments of Life, from Pleaſures and Diverſions and the like, is a very proper Attendant on a Faſt; 'tis a Circumſtance not wholly to be diſregarded, both as it ſerves to expreſs our inward Sorrow and Shame, and a Senſe of our own Unworthineſs even of the common Enjoyments of Life, and as it tends to ſubdue the Fleſh, keep under the Body, and aſſiſt our Devotions. When the *Ninevites* proclaim'd a Faſt, Orders were given that *neither Man nor Beaſt, Herd nor Flock, ſhould taſte any Thing*, *Jonah* iii. 7. This Practice the Light of Nature directed them to, and it hath always been obſerv'd in one Degree or other by thoſe that pretended to this Act of Religion: So *Eſther* required her Country-men, the *Jews, to faſt, and neither to eat nor drink for three Days*, before ſhe went to petition the King in their Behalf, *Eſt.* iv. 16.

And the Reaſon of abſtaining thus from Food (in a publick Faſt eſpecially) is, that it is an Expreſſion of our Sorrow and Humiliation; a tacit Acknowledgment that we have forfeited, and deſerve not ſo much as the common Mercies of Life: And then it very much helps forward inward Sorrow and Contrition, promotes the real Humiliation of the Soul, and all the ſpiritual Work of the Day; ſo that tho' this be not the

main Thing to be regarded, in your keeping a Faſt, yet it is not however ordinarily to be omitted.

The Council of *Calcedon* (which is called a General Council) thought fit to appoint and decree that none ſhould eat any thing on a Faſt-day, till after Evening-prayer was ended. And you know what Cenſure God paſſeth upon the *Jews*, that they found their own Pleaſures upon their Faſt-days, *Iſa.* lviii. 3. Whenever then you ſet about this Work, you ſhould engage the whole Man in it; the Body as well as the Mind ſhould ſhare in the Humiliation, and conſequently ſhould be allowed no Refreſhment, but what Neceſſity requires: And that Neceſſity muſt be judg'd of, not by the Cravings of the Appetite, but by your Capacity for the religious Work and Buſineſs that lies upon your Hands.

The Rule in ſhort is, that you muſt never pamper and pleaſe the Fleſh on theſe Days, but abſtain from your common and ordinary Food, as far as the State of your bodily Strength and Spirits will admit, and as far as your Abſtinence may be uſeful to the ſpiritual Purpoſes of your Faſt. And always remember to manage in this Reſpect, as may beſt keep up a ſerious, devout Frame, and render you moſt fit for your ſacred Employments.

2. A Faſt-day being a time of extraordinary Religion, we ſhould continue in it as long as we can. An Hour or two is not ſufficient, tho' herein regard is to be had to the different Circumſtances of Perſons, to their Strength of Body, and Ability of Mind, and the like Caſes. The Faſt which *Eſther* reſolv'd upon, and call'd the *Jews* to the Obſervation of, was to laſt *three Days*, as you ſee in that juſt mention'd, *Eſt.* iv. 16. And

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tho' I don't propoſe this Example to Imitation, yet methinks it ſhould teach us to devote ſome conſiderable time to this Exerciſe. In the primitive Church they had a weekly Faſt, which they kept till three of the Clock in the Afternoon. And in ſome of their Faſts, they perſevered in their Work through a good part of the Night, even till Cock-crowing, or Break of Day. To end them before Midnight we are told, * was look'd upon, and cenſur'd as a great Piece of Prophaneneſs and Intemperance.

But this I think is carrying the Matter too far, a greater Regard certainly is to be had to *the manner* of performing your Duty, than *to the Time of your continuing in it.* 'Tis of more Importance *how you faſt, than how long. Four* or *five Hours* well employ'd are in God's Account more valuable, and more truly a Faſt, than a whole Day of Abſtinence from Food, from Work, Company, *&c.* a great Part whereof has been ſpent in idle muſing, or going over any dull heartleſs Forms of Devotion.

Tho' I muſt add, The Work we have to do on a Faſt-day is ſo great, ſo various, ſo important, that it cannot well be diſpatch'd in a little time, nor ſhould all be crouded into a little Room. I know it will require a great deal of Attention, Watchfulneſs, and Pains, to keep the Mind in Frame, in a ſerious, ſolemn Frame, for a good part of a Day together, and to addreſs our ſelves to our Buſineſs in all the Branches of it in the manner we ought. But you ſhould conſider, that Self-denial is the fundamental Duty of a Chriſtian, and not to indulge the Fleſh, and through

* Vid. *Cave Prim. Chriſtianity*, P. I. c. 7.

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Love of Eaſe or Pleaſure neglect ſo profitable a Work. If you know not how to deny your ſelf thus far, you will never keep a Faſt to any good Purpoſe. And then indeed you had better not pretend to it, than by your trifling in it affront God and diſappoint yourſelves. To faſt is not only to *forbear a Meal*, but *to employ a Day*, (or as much of it as we can conveniently,) in the moſt ſerious awful Work, in ſearching our Hearts, conſidering our Ways, humbling and chaſtening our Souls before the Lord, and in fervent Supplications to him. And we ſhould not object Difficulty, nor ſtick at the Pains that may be neceſſary in order to our Succeſs therein.

3. The Faſt I ſpeak of, and mean to recommend to you, ſhould be voluntary; a ſort of a free-will Offering, and not what we are put upon, or conſtrain'd to by the Authority and Command of others. And conſequently, as it is to be diſtinguiſhed from the publick Faſts wherein a whole Kingdom is call'd to join, and from thoſe of a more private Nature, that a ſingle Church or Congregation agrees to celebrate; ſo I think it ſhould be obſerv'd on a Week-day, and not on the Lord's-day, becauſe this is not our own time, but already ſacred and appropriated to divine Service.

Indeed the Lord's-day is moſt properly a Day of Rejoycing, and can't with any Decency be turn'd into a Faſt, or a Day of Sorrow and Sadneſs. To faſt on the Day of Chriſt's Reſurrection was accounted an heinous Crime among the primitive Chriſtians, and forbid with great Severity, as utterly unlawful. Even the *Montaniſts* that ſpent ſo much of their time in Faſting, and Acts of Mortification, would not do it on the Lord's-day; their Reaſon was, this Day calls

for ſpiritual Rejoycing: And I reckon I may fitly add, that it is allotted to religious Work already; whereas if we ſet a Day apart for the ſolemn Exerciſes of Religion, it muſt be a Day of our own, or in our own Power.

As to Servants indeed, and ſuch as are not Maſters of their own Time, who can't command another Day when they will, I can't ſay that it is either unlawful or unfit for them to keep a Faſt on the Lord's-day, upon ſpecial Occaſions. It may be neceſſary for them to faſt, and therefore they may be allowed to do ſo then, becauſe they may not have Liberty to do it on a Week-day; but for others, they ſhould (generally at leaſt) make Choice of common Time for that Purpoſe.

Having premiſed theſe Things, I proceed

2dly, To ſet before you *the Ends and Reaſons of a Faſt*, and ſhew you for what Purpoſes, and upon what Occaſions you ought to engage in this Duty: That you may underſtand when you are call'd to it, and what you ſhould aim at in the Performance of it. And if you will conſult the Scripture, or the Nature of Things, you will find the Occaſions of a Faſt are generally ſuch as theſe;

1. The deprecating the divine Diſpleaſure: The preventing Judgments threatned, or removing thoſe that are begun to be inflicted.

Thus *Jehoſaphat* faſted, when invaded by the *Ammonites*, 2 *Chron.* xx. 3. The *Iſraelites*, when ſmitten by the Children of *Benjamin*, *Judges* xx. 26. And in *Joel*'s time, when the Land was in Diſtreſs, *Joel* i. 14, 15. So did *Eſther* and her People, when *Haman* had contriv'd their Deſtruction: And *David*, when the Hand of God was upon the Family, and his Child at the Point of Death, kept a private Faſt on that Account, *beſought God*

for

for the Child, faſted and lay all Night upon the Earth. 2 Sam. xii. 16. And this hath been the Method of good Perſons in all Ages, and great their Succeſs in the Uſe of it: Hereby they have obtain'd Deliverance in the moſt imminent Danger, or been ſupported under their Sufferings.

Mark this then as a proper Reaſon for a Faſt; and conſequently, whenever you are in the like Circumſtances, you will ſee your Call to the Duty, you will know what Courſe to take in ſuch a Caſe for your *Releaſe* from your Troubles, or *Relief* under them.

By Faſting and Prayer we make a ſolemn Application to Heaven, we own the Providence of God, commit our ſelves to his Hands, lay our ſelves at his Foot, and ſupplicate his favourable Regards and Mercy, crying, as they in *Joel*, (ii. 17.) *Spare thy People, O Lord. Let this Cup paſs from me*, this black Cloud be ſcattered. *However not my Will, but thine be done. Here I am; let him do with me, as ſeemeth him good.*

2. Another End of a Faſt is to expreſs our Sympathy with our ſuffering Brethren; eſpecially with any Part of the Church of God, when in Diſtreſs; and to aſſiſt them by our Interceſſions, voluntarily to bear ſome of their Burden, humbly to bewail and repreſent their Grievances, and plead with God on their Behalf.

On this Account good *Nehemiah* faſted, when he heard of the Affliction and Reproach of his Brethren, the *Jews*; that *the Walls of* Jeruſalem *were broken down, and the Gates thereof burnt with Fire, he ſat down and wept and mourn'd certain Days, and faſted and prayed before the God of Heaven,* *Neh.* i. 3, 4. The ſame divine and excellent Spirit was in *Daniel*, (*chap.* ix. 3.) he faſted and prayed, when *he remembred his Brethren* in Captivity.

vity. As they wept when *they remembred* Zion, the City of their Solemnities and the Enjoyments thereof. And *David* tells us, that when others of his Acquaintance *were sick*, his Cloathing was Sackcloth, and he humbled himself with Fasting, *Psal.* xxxv. 13.

And no Question this is one very good Reason and Design of a Fast; a Christian ought to have a publick Spirit; we should weep with them that weep and be of a sympathizing Temper. You know it is given as the Character of some very indifferent Persons, *that they are not grieved for the Afflictions of* Joseph, *Amos.* vi. 6. We are not to confine our Troubles and Concern within the narrow Sphere of our own Families and Houses; the Circumstances of others, the Affairs of our Christian Brethren, their Sins, their Scandals, their Sufferings and Sorrows: The Affairs of Christ's Church, the *Desolation of his Sanctuary*, or any Part of his *Vineyard*, may give us Occasion for Fasting and Humiliation, and supply us with matter (among other Things) of very profitable and comfortable Devotion. Oh endeavour to get your Hearts touch'd with a divine Spirit; endeavour for *a Fellow feeling* that becomes Christians, and let it display itself this way.

3. 'Tis one End of a Fast, and a good Reason why we should fast, to beg Direction. With this View the Duty has been practised by good Men, and Thousands have experienced the happy Consequences thereof. Thus the Children of the Captivity fasted upon their Return to *Babylon, to seek a right way for themselves and for their little ones, and God was entreated of them*, *Ezra.* viii. 21, 23. When you have Matter of any great Moment depending, any thing that nearly concerns you, your Persons, Families, or others, and want Direction

rection and Conduct, you are then called to this extraordinary Exerciſe, by which you commit your ſelves and Affairs to God; begging he would *ſend forth his Light and his Truth*, would ſuggeſt a *right Way*, *guide you with his Counſel*, and divert you from any Purpoſe that would be againſt you, againſt your Duty or Comfort, or both.

4. Faſting is alſo ſeaſonable, when we are engaged in any weighty Undertaking, that we may ſecure the divine Preſence and Bleſſing. Thus Chriſt being about to ſend out his Diſciples, retired, and ſpent the Night before in Prayer, *Luke* vi. 12. *It came to paſs in thoſe Days, that he went out into a Mountain to pray, and continued all Night in Prayer to God.* Upon which it follows in the 13th Verſe; *And when it was Day, he called to him his Diſciples, and of them he choſe twelve, whom alſo he named Apoſtles.* And Reaſon ſeems to direct, that in the greater Concerns of Life we ſhould in this extraordinary manner acknowledge God. 'Tis his Bleſſing that makes our way proſperous, our Enterpriſes ſucceſsful, our Life comfortable. And it becomes us in this more ſolemn Method to endeavour to obtain it. In every remarkable Turn of Life, upon every Occurrence that hath, or is like to have a conſiderable Influence on our Affairs, we ſhould go to God in this devout way, ſpread the Caſe before him, and ſeek his Regards and Benediction.

5. The humbling and ſubduing the Body, and reducing it into an entire Subjection to the Mind, is a very proper End and Reaſon of a Faſt. Something of this may be implied as the Apoſtle's Practice in what he ſays, 1 *Cor.* ix. 27. I keep under my Body, and bring into Subjection ὑπωπιάζω. He refers to the Diſcipline of the Champions and Com-

Combatants he had been ſpeaking of before in that Chapter, and the Word implies that he uſed a ſort of Severity towards his Body. Which it may be well enough ſuppoſed was done by Faſting, ſince he tells us elſewhere, he was *in Faſtings often*, 2 Cor. xi. 27. Thus it's probable he ſubdued and conquer'd the Affections and Paſſions of it, and rendered it more fit to ſubſerve his great and good Mind in all its Operations. The Body, we ſay truly, is a good Servant, but an ill Maſter. And nothing doth more concern a Chriſtian than to take care never to be brought under the Power of its Inclinations, Appetites and Paſſions. Now when Faſting is neceſſary for this Purpoſe, it is what we are then call'd to.

6. The moſt direct End of a Faſt is the Mortification of Sin; which ought never to be forgot, whatever particular Errand we may have in our Applications to God on ſuch Occaſions. This is the more common End of all our Faſts, and ſhould always be regarded in them. Do you find the Mind diſtemper'd? the Heart hardened? Grace weak? and Corruption grow ſtrong? Are the Works of the Fleſh manifeſt in you? Doth Pride, Envy, Malice, the Love of this World, or any other *Filthineſs, whether of Fleſh or Spirit*, prevail? Faſting is a Duty that your Circumſtances then require; 'tis highly ſeaſonable at ſuch a time. You may often experience a Luſt, (like thoſe Dæmons mention'd in the Goſpel) ſo ſtubborn, that it will not come forth but by Faſting and Prayer, *Mark* ix. 29. And when 'tis ſo, your Buſineſs lies plain before you; Faſting is a proper Remedy againſt the Diſeaſe, and ſhould be uſed as ſuch.

7. It may be reckon'd among the Ends of a Faſt, or Occaſions for this extraordinary Duty, *viz.*

viz. The procuring further Supplies of divine Grace, and particularly Strength and Ability for any Work or Service we are call'd to. Every Chriſtian has Concerns upon his Hands of great Importance. To maintain our Ground againſt our ſpiritual Enemies, and manage our Warfare with Succeſs; to walk with God in our reſpective Callings; to converſe with him aright in his Ordinances, and in one Word to *live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in the preſent World*, is no ſmall Matter. Indeed 'tis a Matter of Difficulty, and requires a great deal of Wiſdom and Grace. And then there may be *ſpecial Work*, which Magiſtrates, Miniſters, and even common Chriſtians may ſometimes have incumbent on them, that calls for *ſpecial help* from Heaven. Now when we find our ſelves defective in our Chriſtian Duty in general, or any particular Service that is more peculiarly demanded of us, we ſhould betake our ſelves to God by ſolemn Prayer and Faſting.

8. To make our Peace with God after a Breach; to obtain Pardon of Sin, and ſome Tokens of the divine Favour, is not the leaſt of the many Occaſions a Chriſtian has for Work of this Nature. A Faſt-day is *a Day of Atonement*, as the great Anniverſary Faſt amongſt the *Jews* was call'd, *Lev.* xvi. 29, 30. So that this is to be conſider'd as one of the Reaſons of this Duty. You are to engage in it that you may humble your ſelves, afflict your Souls, exerciſe Repentance and obtain Abſolution.

9. We ſhould faſt upon this Deſign and for this End, to attain higher Degrees of Communion with God; even when the Diſtempers and Diſorders of the Mind don't more than ordinarily oblige to it. This I doubt not is the Caſe of ſome (tho' I am afraid but of few) in their Days

of

of ſecret Faſting. They have in ſome Meaſure conquer'd their more dangerous Corruptions, and brought their Life and Converſation to a good Decorum. And yet faſt, often faſt, purely that they may have Time and Opportunity for more ſenſible Communion with God. A faſt Day it is true is with them ſtill *a Day of Humiliation*, and what they will have occaſion for *as ſuch* ſo long as they live in this State of Imperfection. But it is alſo *a Day of ſpiritual Triumph*, of divine Conſolations. 'Tis ſet apart as a Day of more continued, cloſe, and intimate Communion and Intercourſe with God. And how happy are thoſe divine, devout Souls that are acquainted with ſuch a Work as this is, and faſt often upon this View, that they may ſolace themſelves in the Preſence of God, and ſpend a Day in nearer Converſe with him. Once more,

10. I may add hereupon, as another End of a Faſt with the more perfect Chriſtians, the getting the Mind more abſtracted from the Body; more loos'd from it (as I may ſay) and fitted for the ſeparate State. This is a noble Deſign of ſuch a Solemnity, and worthy of a Chriſtian. When he undertakes this Work in order to withdraw himſelf as far as he can from the Body, and raiſe himſelf above the ſenſitive animal Life. By frequent Exerciſes of this kind a good Perſon is making his vigorous Efforts towards the Upper World, *the World of Spirits*. He is endeavouring to enter upon the Life, the Work, the Happineſs of Heaven, and wou'd taſte it before-hand.

Theſe and ſuch like are proper Reaſons of keeping Faſt-days. I don't mention theſe Particulars as if they were all the Ends of Faſting, but only the moſt obvious and conſiderable; and to ſome or other of them I think we may reduce

most of the Occasions we can be supposed to have of engaging in this Duty. And so I come in the Method propos'd.

3dly, To endeavour to recommend the Practice to you. To prove it your Duty, and invite you to regard it as such. To which End I shall lay before you the following Considerations without much Enlargement.

1. I take it to be a Branch of natural Religion. A Dictate of Nature itself. 'Tis not to be accounted among the Institutions of the ceremonial Law, or a Part of positive Religion; but it seems to be a natural and moral Duty. Every Man's own Reason and Conscience will inform him of the Necessity and Reasonableness of it upon proper Occasions. All our Blessings evidently flow out of the Hands of God, and are derived from his Bounty; therefore they are to be sought for of him with becoming Seriousness, Devotion, and Importunity. In case of Sin 'tis fit we should humble our selves before him, and testify an unfeigned Repentance; so that Humiliation and Prayer should go together. And when our Difficulties are great, or our Wants extraordinary, any one's Reason and Judgment will direct to a Fast; to make Application to God in this Way for the Conduct and Supplies we have need of. Hence we find the Duty practised among the Heathens themselves, as appears from the Case of the *Ninevites*, Jonas iii. 5. And common History gives us many more Instances to the same Purpose among the *Egyptians*, *Greeks*, *Romans*, and others, who all esteem'd it a Part of their Religion.

2. We find it suppos'd in the New Testament as a standing Duty. Thus it is by Christ himself in my Text, where he doth not institute or com-

command it *de novo* (as was observ'd before) but takes it for granted, that his Disciples would fast. *Think when thou fastest*, says he, speaking of it as what wou'd, and ought to obtain among his Followers. He knew they wou'd have need of it, and a Call to it, and thereupon directs them how to behave themselves on such Occasions. So when *John's Disciples* propos'd this Question to him, *why do we and the* Pharisees *fast often, but thy Disciples fast not?* He in his Answer plainly approves what they did, and tells them that tho' it was not so proper for his Disciples to do it then, yet the Season was coming when they should fast too. *Can the Children of the Bride-chamber mourn, as long as the Bridegroom is with them? But the Days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast*, Matt. ix. 14, 15. And when our Lord introduces the proud *Pharisee*, saying, *I fast twice in the Week*, Luke xviii. 12. He doth not censure his Practice, but only blames him for his Pride and vain Glory in boasting of it. To the like Effect that of the Apostle is observable, 1 Cor. vii. 5. *Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with Consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to Fasting and Prayer*; both the Husband and Wife may have their Times of extraordinary Prayer and Fasting. This the Apostle supposes there, and encourages their Attendance on such Work. Fasting is therefore suppos'd and allow'd as a standing Duty in the New Testament. And accordingly I would observe further,

3. That it has been a Practice among good Men in all Ages of the Church. We have sundry Instances of the Fact, which I shall represent to you in a short History of this Matter. And that I may keep close to my Subject, I shall pass over

the Inſtances we have in Scripture of a more publick Nature, as that of [a] *Joſhua* at *Ai*, of [b] *Samuel* at *Mizpeh*, of [c] *David* at *Ziklag*, and [d] *Hebron*, of *Hezekiah*, *Aſa*, *Jehoſaphat*, and others of the pious Kings of *Judah*, that of *Ezra*, and the like. And only conſider ſome Examples of a ſecret or private Faſt.

And here, if we look back as far as the Patriarchs, we have Reaſon to think this Duty was practis'd by them. I know not but I may mention *Jacob* as an Inſtance of the Truth of what I ſay. When he was going to meet his Brother *Eſau* in great Conſternation and Fear, we find he retires, and gives himſelf to more than ordinary Prayer, *Gen.* xxxii. 24. He ſent away his Family, his Wives, Children and Servants, conveyed them over the Brook *Jabbock*, and then it would ſeem he return'd, and ſpent the whole Night in Devotion. Jacob *was left alone; and there wreſtled a Man with him until the Breaking of the Day.* Now this was a ſort of a Faſt, ſuch a one as his Circumſtances at that time would allow; he was travelling by *Day*, and had the Concerns of his Family to mind, therefore takes the *Night* for the Work, which he ſpends in pleading with God, in Prayer and Supplication ſuitable to his State and Condition then. 'Tis alſo probable, it was ſuch a religious Service as this, that *Job* is ſaid to have done continually, *Chap.* i. 5. He is with Reaſon thought to have lived in the patriarchal Age; and it being cuſtomary among his Sons mutually to feaſt one another and rejoice together, perhaps on their Birth-days, that good Man always fear'd

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[a] Joſh. vii. 6. [b] 1 Sam. vii. 6.
[c] 2 Sam. i. 12. [d] 2 Sam. iii. 35.

they

they should have said or done something amiss on those Occasions; and therefore never failed to offer Sacrifices for them, which were attended with solemn Fasting and Prayer. *He rose up early in the Morning*, the most proper time for Devotion, *offer'd Burnt-Offerings*, and kept a Fast on their Account; at the same time, it may be, exciting *them* severally to keep one for themselves. Something of this seems to be intended, when 'tis said, their Father *sent* to them and *sanctified them*, i. e. put them upon sanctifying themselves by Prayer join'd with Fasting.

Under the Law of *Moses*, besides the annual Fast prescrib'd on the great Day of Expiation, and the stated Seasons which the Nation of the *Jews* set apart for publick Humiliation and Fasting, such as the Fasts of the *fourth*, *fifth*, *seventh* and *tenth Month*, whereof you read *Zach.* viii. 19. besides these, I say, devout Men observ'd private Fasts upon special Emergencies.

David is a remarkable Instance to this Purpose. When the Hand of God was upon him and upon his Family; when *the Lord struck the Child* he had by *Bathsheba*; *and it was sick*; 'tis said *he besought God for the Child, and went in, and lay all Night upon the Earth*, 2 Sam. xii. 15, 16. He fasted and prayed, and it would seem by what follows, that he continued more Days than one in this Posture and Practice; only, it may be, taking some little Refreshment of a coarser sort once a Day. And thus he was frequently employ'd at other Times. He was a Man of great *Affliction* and great religious *Affection*; and we may well suppose, that as he fasted in so solemn a Manner when his Child was at the Point of Death, he would do the same upon other Occasions of Family Troubles, many of which he met with. This we may

suppose concerning him, and indeed *infer* it from his own Words: *I have chastened my Soul with Fasting*, says he, *Psal.* lxix. 10. And again, *Psal.* cix. 24. *My Knees are weak through Fasting, and my Flesh faileth of Fatness.* Which, if it refers to his Fasting on a religious Account, must denote great Frequency in the Work. He prayed often, fasted often, and wept much; and indeed had it not been so, he would not have kept up that Communion with God he did, nor have had such a lively Sense of the divine Presence and Favour as he enjoyed.

Another Example I might take Notice of is that of *Esther*; when she ordered that all the *Jews* in *Shushan* should be gathered together and fast, neither eating nor drinking for three Days, she betakes herself to the same Employment in a more private Way: *I and my Maidens will fast likewise*, says she, *so will I go in unto the King; and if I perish, I perish*, Esth. iv. 16. She with her Servants by themselves kept three Days successively of Fasting and Prayer.

I may also instance in *Nehemiah*, who hearing of the Desolation of *Jerusalem*, and of the distressed Circumstances of his Brethren the *Jews*, expressed his affectionate Concern in the like pious Manner. *I sat down and wept*, says he, *and mourned certain Days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of Heaven*, Neh. i. 4. And the excellent Prayer he offered up on that Account you have in the following Part of that Chapter.

The Prophet *Daniel* likewise being greatly concerned for the Children of the Captivity, and their Return, applies himself to the same solemn Exercise, *Dan.* ix. 3. *I set my Face unto the Lord God to seek by Prayer and Supplications, with Fasting, Sackcloth and Ashes.* He fasted and pleaded with God

God in Behalf of his People *Israel*, and continued until the time of the Evening Sacrifice in this Service, when the Angel *Gabriel* was dispatch'd from Heaven to assure him of the divine Favour.

Nor do we want Instances of this Nature in the New Testament: For not to insist on what is said of *Anna*, Luke ii. 37. *That she departed not from the Temple, but served God with Fasting and Prayer Night and Day*; because this may probably refer to the publick joint Worship of the Temple, in which she constantly bore a Part at the appointed Seasons; we have an Instance full to the Purpose, Acts x. 30. *Cornelius* said, *four Days ago, I was fasting until this Hour*, &c. Here's a religious Proselyte Fasting in his own House, and by himself in Retirement; and while he was thus employ'd, he was favour'd with an extraordinary Testimony of the divine Acceptance, an Angel was sent to certify him of it, and direct him how he might become a Christian.

And you know the Apostle *Paul* mentions Fasting as one of the Ways by which he and the rest of the Apostles approved themselves the Ministers of Christ, 2 *Cor.* vi. 4, 5. And in another Place of that Epistle, which I cited before, he tells us of himself that he was *in Fastings often*; and some ancient Writers say as much of the other Apostles after our Saviour's Ascension.

In a Word, let me observe, that we have the Duty recommended to us by great Examples under every Dispensation of Religion; that of *Moses* under the Law; of *Elijah* among the Prophets, and of Christ himself under the Gospel; each of these fasted forty Days upon Occasion, which is enough (methinks) to recommend the Duty to all their Disciples, and make it of Value in the Church to the end of the World. These three

greatest of Men (the last of which was more than a Man) who were all present at the wonderful *Transfiguration*, and enwrapt in the same Glory at Mount *Tabor*, were eminent for Fasting. They lived much in Heaven, and convers'd much with God; and as a help to such a Life, they prayed and fasted much.

I might go on to the *primitive Church*; and shew in how great Request this Duty was among the Members thereof. Indeed it soon degenerated into Formality, and turn'd into Superstition, when they began to bring it under the Regulation of their *Church Canons*, to appoint the Days the Church should fast, and the Hours of their Fasting. However, the Thing itself they received as a Practice venerable for its Antiquity, and derived from the Hands of all the Worthies of the Church in former Ages. Hence they had not only *Annual Fasts*, but two *every Week*, which they called their [a] *Stations*, not because they stood all the while, but in Allusion to the military Stations and keeping of *Guards* among the *Romans*; for as *Tertullian* [b] observes they were watchful, and kept close at it during this Service; which generally lasted till the ninth Hour, or three of the Clock in the Afternoon, and by many the Work was continued till the Evening; part of their time being spent in publick, and part in private. I do not suppose indeed this was any great Service to Religion. A general Rule or Law obliging to a fixed certain time of Fasting, so often in the Month, or (as they did) every Week, is like to prove a Snare, but will hardly promote the great End of that religious Exercise. However, it

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[a] *Cave Prim. Christian.* P. I. p. 180. [b] *De Jejuniis.*

shews

shews what the practice was, and what Sense they had of things at that time.

To sum up all, the Patriarchs, Jews, Proselytes and Christians have all agreed in this Practice upon special Occasions, *i. e.* the truly religious and devout among them have; and even others have owned it in *Doctrine* and *Profession*, however negligent they might be in the Practice. *Moses* fasted, *Elias* and other Prophets fasted; Christ and his Apostles fasted, *John* and his Disciples fasted often; the primitive *Christians* fasted. It has been the Practice all along for devout Men to set Time apart for more solemn Religion, and for closer Converse with God. And this should be your Practice too: *This is the good old Way, this is the Way, walk therein.*

I cannot question but your Necessities are the same with those of other Believers and other Christians, that have lived in the times before you. I doubt not you have as much Occasion for this Duty as they had. You have the same Dangers and Difficulties sometimes before you; the same Troubles and Afflictions upon you; the same Corruptions to conflict with; the same spiritual Enemies to wrestle against; and consequently you have as loud a Call to Fasting as they had, and if you be true to your own Interests and faithful in your Profession, you cannot neglect it. And hereupon

4thly, I am to shew you what the Work of a secret Fast is, and how to manage it. That you may not be discouraged for want of Skill and Understanding how to go about such a Duty, and go through it, I shall assist you as well as I can. And here I shall first premise some things as preliminary to a Fast, and then direct you how to begin and carry it on with Advantage.

1. I shall take notice of some Things pre-requisite and presuppos'd to the carrying on a Work of this Nature. As

1. It would be very much to your Purpose to have a *Diary* prepar'd before-hand; because this will be of considerable Use to you in the Process of your Fast. How to form and how to keep your *Diary* requires more Discourse than I have room for at present. Only let me hint in a few Words, that the *Diary* I am advising to should be a Volume, and not Scraps of loose Paper, or a few single Sheets, but a Book either in Quarto or Octavo regularly paged. And when you have prepared such a little Volume, it may be proper to have two *Tables* in the Beginning of it; one containing a complete and regular System of Christian and Divine Graces, Rules of Life and Conversation; and the other a Catalogue of Sins and Miscarriages against the several Rules and Graces; both grounded upon Scripture. I cannot here give you a Specimen of the one and the other; this would take up too much of our Time, and may not be thought so suitable for the Pulpit. But the Thing itself is of the greatest Use, in the stated and ordinary as well as extraordinary Work of the Closet; and accordingly I recommend it to you. It will be necessary frequently to have recourse hither (to these Tables) when you are examining and trying yourselves; both that you may discern wherein you are most defective, what Graces you most want, and what Iniquities most prevail against you. And then in such a *Diary* you are to take an Account of the State of your own Souls from Time to Time, with those Occurrences in Providence, and Remarks in reading the holy Scriptures, which you

have occasion to make, and which I before directed you to.

Endeavour therefore to furnish your selves with a regular *Diary*. It will be of the greatest Importance to you in the whole Work of your Oratory, in the Management of your closet Religion, and particularly in the Duties of a Fast. And indeed without it you will find yourselves very lame and deficient, and very much at a Loss in both.

2. It may be proper by way of preliminary, as a prerequisite to the due Celebration of a Fast, to have recorded the Occasions and Reasons of the Duty. Endeavour to inform your selves, and note down in your *Diary* what are the ends of fasting in general. Hereby you will the more readily apprehend, when you have a Call to the Work, and with what Views you should undertake it. I must here refer you to what I have just now said upon that Subject, and am at present recommending it to you to record the main Things to be aimed at in this Exercise, which I have there enumerated. Such and such (say you) are the ends of a Fast. As (1.) To deprecate the divine Displeasure. (2.) To express our Sympathy with our suffering Brethren. (3.) To beg Direction in Matters of Importance. (4.) (5.) And so on. Remark these, as proper Reasons of Fasting; set them down, and any other Ends of the Duty that may occur to your Thoughts, not unfit to be taken notice of.

3. As another Preliminary, it may be of Service to you also, to have recorded in your *Diary* the best Order and Method of carrying on the Duties of a Fast. By this Means you will be able more directly to fall upon your Work, without being at a Loss how to begin, or how to proceed.

And

And herein I am now to endeavour your Assistance, which is what remains for me to do upon this Head. Therefore

2. I shall shew you, how to manage the Work and Duty of a Fast. And in order hereto, I shall represent to you the whole Process of it from the Beginning to the End, and lead you Step by Step through all the Business incumbent on you, so as you may find Acceptance with God, and receive Advantage to your own Souls. Not that it's necessary for every one to confine himself to this Method I am about to propose, and proceed just in this Manner, as if the Work could not be done in another Way. I would not prescribe to you, but leave you to your own Choice and Judgment, and to take that Method which upon Experience and Tryal you find best: Only as I think this Order and Method pertinent, I would recommend it as what may be of use to such as know not a better.

1. Begin with imploring the divine Presence, Assistance and Blessing. Beg that God would fix your Attention, awaken your Faculties, excite your Affections, bring you into and keep you in a suitable Frame. It is more than a common Work you are about, and a common and ordinary Frame will not answer it. *My Heart is fixed,* (says the Psalmist) *O God, my Heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise.* It follows, *Awake up my Glory, awake Psaltery and Harp: I myself will wake early,* Psal. lvii. 7, 8. You should endeavour thus to address yourselves to the solemn and important Business before you. Now, if ever, you are to be very serious; a wandering Heart, dull Affections will soon make you flag and grow weary, and either break off your Work or render it uncomfortable. Beg therefore, that God would come

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in to your Aſſiſtance. Commit your Thoughts and Affections to his Conduct; and wait for the Influences of his Grace and Spirit, plead with him for Direction in what you are undertaking, and that he would ſupply you with Life, Strength and Serioufneſs, and a devout Frame of Mind, to carry you through the whole of it to the Advantage and Comfort of your immortal Souls. Earneſtly beg, that he would diſpoſe you for the Service you are entring on, ſucceed and proſper you in it, and bleſs the Work of your Hands and Hearts. And then,

2. Having endeavoured to get the Heart into tune, and warmed it by a ſerious Addreſs to God, and committed it into his Hand; it may be proper to ſtate the particular Occaſions and Reaſons for the preſent Faſt. To which Purpoſe you are to review the ſeveral Ends of a Faſt I have been mentioning, and which I have adviſed you to keep an Account of in your *Diary*. And then conſider for which of theſe Ends, or for what Ends in particular you now engage in the Duty. And here let me hint,

1. That it may not be one particular Cauſe you have for your Faſt, but a Variety of Cauſes: Almoſt all the Occaſions of a Faſt may meet in your Caſe, and accordingly you ſhould remark thoſe that do; as thus; *I find great diſorder of Mind; many are the Diſtempers of my Soul. I have little Faith, little Love to God, ſtrong Corruptions, my Life has been very unprofitable, very irregular, very vile; I have little Ability for the Work of God, know little of Communion with him, have little Delight in ſpiritual Exerciſes. I want mortifying Grace, pardoning Mercies, a freſh anointing of the good Spirit. I want Wiſdom, Courage, Zeal, Reſolution. I want quickening, I want Comfort.* It is often thus with a Chriſtian;

a Christian; all is wrong with him, he is ready to cry out, as in the Prophet *Isa.* i. 5, 6. *The whole Head is sick, and the whole Heart faint; from the Crown of the Head to the Sole of the Foot there is no Soundness.* Now when Things are at this pass with you, and you thereupon betake yourselves to Fasting and Prayer, it may be of some Use to mark the several Occasions of the present Work.

2. Sometimes the Occasion of a Fast is special and particular; and this is accordingly to be noted. As for Instance thus. I need Direction in such and such a weighty and important Affair, and for this would I address myself unto God: Or, I find such a Corruption exceeding strong; I fast with a special Eye to that Sin. O for Grace! O for Victory! I have fallen in this or that Instance; thus or thus have I done, and I desire this Day to offer the *Sacrifice of a broken and a contrite Heart*; I purpose upon this occasion to wrestle with God for a Pardon, nor will I let him go unless he grant it. I have such or such a Want or Weakness; I would have the one supply'd, or the other removed. This or that Cup pass from me, or at least be sanctified to my Advantage: and for this I will beseech the Lord, and not give over, till at last he say, *my Grace is sufficient for thee.* I have heard much of Communion with God, something (through his Grace) I have tasted of it, though alas but little and but seldom: I come now therefore to seek it with the utmost Importunity, to get a more lively Experience what Converse with him means. O that this Day I may see his Power and Glory; that my Soul may have such a satisfying Enjoyment of him, as I shall have reason to remember as long as I live! This is now what I set myself to endeavour for; the Lord God of *Israel* grant

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me my Petition and Request in this Matter. I add,

3. When you have any one special Intention in your Fast, you should not overlook other Ends and Reasons of Fasting. Though you should mainly regard that which is the particular Occasion of the present Solemnity; yet you should also have some regard to the other stated and constant Ends and Uses of that Exercise; and accordingly should review and remark them, when you are engaging in the Work. This is the second Step I would advise you to take,

3. You are next to proceed to Examination. *The Fast of the seventh Month* among the *Jews* began with *blowing of Trumpets*; and ten Days after was the great Day of Expiation, *Levit.* xxiii. 27. 24. Now the blowing of Trumpets (as *Maimonides*, a learned *Jew*, informs us) was a sort of a Summons to the People to consider their Ways, and examine themselves, that they might be prepar'd for the solemn Work of Humiliation, and the great and excellent Blessings of that Day. Upon your Fast-days, you should make the Summons to a diligent, serious, thorough Examination of your Hearts and Lives; call yourselves to a strict impartial Account, that you may have a true clear View of the State of your Souls, be suitably affected with it, and know how to apply yourselves to God on their Behalf. And a Particular or two I would here recommend to you by way of Advice.

1. Beg that God would assist you by his Spirit: that he would awaken Conscience and make it faithful; that he would *set your Sins in order before your Eyes*; which he can do, and sometimes doth with that Clearness and Conviction that fills the Soul with Amazement, Shame and Indigna-

tion. 'Tis the Work and Office of the Spirit of God to bring *Sins* to remembrance, as well as the *Truths of the Word*: Have recourſe to, and depend upon him for this Purpoſe. And particularly beg, he would help you in making a Judgment of your State. Put up the Pſalmiſt's Requeſts, *Pſal.* cxxxix. 23, 24. *Search me, O God, and know my Heart; try me and know my Thoughts; and ſee if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlaſting.* As in the firſt awakening of the Soul, it pleaſes God ſometimes to lay open at once all the Scenes of Sin and Folly a Perſon has been guilty of; ſo the ſame is done afterwards, (upon occaſion eſpecially of ſolemn Humiliation) in the moving of the Spirit of God upon the Mind: Otherwiſe it will remain ſtill a *Chaos*, a Heap of Confuſion.

2. Having ſought Help from Heaven, it may not be amiſs to look into your *Diary*, and peruſe former Accounts of yourſelves. Read over ſuch *Liſts* of your Sins as you find there recorded; this may be a Means of bringing to Mind many Particulars you have forgot; and beſides the Circumſtances, with which ſuch Paſſages are generally recorded, will ordinarily affect you. Proceed therefore thus, in the twentieth, or fiftieth, or hundredth Page of my *Diary*, ſuch a Day I examin'd myſelf, and I find ſuch and ſuch Things charged upon me as the great Sins and Miſcarriages of my Life, the threatning Diſtempers of my Soul. Now as you cannot well read over ſuch Tranſactions without ſome ſenſible Commotion; ſo you will naturally be led to compare your ſelves at preſent, with yourſelves at that Time. As in ſuch a Manner as this I find I am guilty of many of theſe Sins ſtill. In this or that Matter I hope I have made ſome Progreſs. In other

Inſtances I am rather on the declining Hand. This Review and Compariſon will admirably prepare for the further Buſineſs before you; both ſuggeſt Matter, and aſſiſt the Affections. And then,

3. Proceed to draw up a *Liſt and Catalogue* of your Sins. In what Order to do this I ſhall not preſcribe. The Table I mentioned before, with which your Diary is to be furniſhed, may be of good Uſe to you in this Caſe; or you may have recourſe to the *Ten Commandments*, and examine yourſelves under every one of them, referring your Sins to the Precepts of the moral Law violated thereby. Or if that be apprehended a Matter of Nicety, and too difficult for you; then you may make the Examination upon the ſeveral Parts of Life in a more eaſy Method, with reference to the Government of your Hearts and Thoughts, to the Religion of the Cloſet, the Family, the publick Aſſembly, the Sanctification of the Lord's-day, *&c.* As thus,

1. I am ſenſible the temper and frame of my Heart is very much amiſs. O how much Vanity, Pride, Carnality, Envy, Malice, Uncharitableneſs, and the like, yet poſſeſs, corrupt and ſour my Mind. And here you are to inſert the Inſtances you are conſcious of, endeavouring to drop a Tear over every one of them.

2. I find myſelf upon the Review chargeable with great Neglects, and great Remiſſneſs with reference to the Duties of the Cloſet. My Delight has been too little in the Law of the Lord; I have too ſeldom read the Scriptures, and ſeldomer endeavoured to work the great Truths thereof upon my Mind and Affections. I have taken little Pains in communicating with my own Heart; have not ſo conſtantly as became me, re-

viſed at Night the Tranſactions of the Day, and ſettled the Affairs of my Soul. I have not duly watch'd unto Prayer, nor in it, nor ſpent the Time I ſhould have done upon my Knees, or in managing the Matters that lie between God and my own Soul.

3. As to family Religion I have been very defective. Not walking within my Houſe with a perfect Heart; either I have not made, or but ſorrily purſued good *Joſhua*'s Reſolution, *that as for me and my Houſe, we will ſerve the Lord*, Joſh. xxiv. 15. I have not inſtructed thoſe under my Charge, have not prayed for them, nor prayed with them, as I ought to have done.

4. I acknowledge I have not ſanctified God in his Houſe. But have been dead, diſtracted, vain and irreverent in my Behaviour there. I do not join in Prayer and Praiſe, as one that is worſhipping the glorious Majeſty of Heaven and Earth; do not take ſufficient Pains to prepare my Heart for publick Worſhip, nor to watch it, and get it impreſt when engaged therein.

5. And as I have polluted God's Sanctuary, ſo I have profaned his Sabbath. Where you are to take Notice of your particular Failings; your ſlothful Omiſſions of Duties, or Careleſſneſs in them; your not withdrawing from the World, ſequeſtering your Thoughts, Hearts and Affections from it in Time, or ſo far as you ſhould; and your being too little taken up with God and in his Service throughout the Day.

6. You may next add your relative Sins. As Husbands, Wives, Parents, Children, Maſters, Servants, and the like. And here charge upon yourſelves ſuch Neglects and Tranſgreſſions, as you have been guilty of; which are moſt inconſiſtent

ſiſtent with the Duties of your reſpective Characters and Relations.

7. To theſe ſubjoin the Offences of the Tongue. If you have been drawn to talk deceitfully, and ſay what is falſe; if in any Caſe you have not ſpoke the *Truth in your Hearts*, note it down, as a heinous Tranſgreſſion, with ſuch Scriptures as condemn this Sin, and ſhew the Puniſhment of it. If you have taken undue Liberties with the Name and Reputation of your Brethren or Neighbours; have been guilty of *backbiting* and *ſpeaking Evil* of others. If any *corrupt Communication has proceeded out of your Mouths*, and not what is *good to the Uſe of edifying*. In ſhort, whatever have been your Slips and Failings this way, bring them into the Account againſt yourſelves. And then,

8. Another particular you may remark, is the Improvement of your Time; a Talent of ſo great Worth, and upon the due Uſe whereof ſo much depends. Take notice how much precious Time you have trifled or ſinn'd away; how many valuable Hours, if not Days, you have loſt, and made no Conſcience how you ſpent. Conſider wherein and how far you have been guilty in this Matter, and accordingly lay your Accuſation.

Under theſe and the like Heads you may digeſt the Sins you diſcover upon Examination. Let the Account be as full as you can, and be as particular as you can in recording them. And if there be any of the groſſer Miſcarriages in your Indictment, note down the Time when they were committed, with all their Circumſtances. I will only add under this Head,

4. Having examin'd yourſelves and drawn up the Charge, read and think it over, till you get

your Hearts deeply affected with it; there is not any thing I know of, that tends more to awaken in the Soul the Paſſions of godly Sorrow, Shame, Self-abhorrence and a holy Indignation againſt yourſelves, than this. When you peruſe the black Catalogue of your Sins and Follies, methinks, you ſhould cry out with *Ezra*, Chap. ix. 6. *O my God, I am aſham'd, and bluſh to lift up my Face to thee, my God; for mine Iniquities are increaſed over my Head, and my Treſpaſſes grown up unto the Heavens.* Set your Sins in full View, and hold them there, till you feel that inward Contrition you ought to manifeſt for them. And in the mean Time while you are doing this, be often lifting up your Hearts to God, entreating he would touch them from above, that you may be ſuitably melted and impreſs'd. *So fooliſh was I and ignorant,* (ſays the Pſalmiſt) *I was as a Beaſt before thee,* Pſal. lxxiii. 22. This is the Cenſure he paſſes upon himſelf, when he came to reflect upon his Behaviour referr'd to there. Endeavour to think thus of your Sins, and of yourſelves on the Account of them. And having gone ſo far, you are

5. To advance another Step, and that is to fall down before God, and with great Enlargement and Brokenneſs confeſs your Sins. Take care to be particular, full and pungent in your Acknowledgment. You may, if you ſee Occaſion, keep the Liſt you have drawn up of your Offences before you, that you may glance at each Head, and ſo be ſure to miſs none; ſpread them before the Lord, humble yourſelves for them, own and bewail them in a truly penitent Manner. And if you be duly affected, and in a tolerably good Frame, you will probably be able to continue an Hour or more in this part of your Exer-

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ciſe, which may not be improper; tho' ſtill remember, that it is the Temper of the Heart God looks at, much more than the Copiouſneſs of Expreſſion, or Length of the Duty. And then, when you come off your Knees, pauſe a little, and ſpend ſome Time in Meditation; either ſitting, walking, or both. In which you ſhould employ many Thoughts upon the Sins you have been confeſſing, repreſenting them to your Minds in all their Heinouſneſs and Aggravations; preaching to your own Hearts thereupon, and ſending up ſerious Ejaculations to Heaven. And I am perſuaded, if Conſcience be awakened, and the Heart opened by the Work you have been about, you will not want ſufficient Imployment for your Meditations and Reflections at this Time. I only take Liberty to mention it as a fit Seaſon for ſuch Buſineſs, and leave you to improve it as well as you can.

6. After a convenient Time ſpent in that Manner, it may be proper to return to your Knees again, and employ another Hour ſuppoſe, or as long as you think fit in Prayer and Supplication. Where you are to plead with God for pardoning Mercy; that this *thick Cloud of Tranſgreſſions* may be *blotted out*, your numerous Sins forgiven; that he would *have mercy upon you according to his loving Kindneſs, and according to the multitude of his tender Mercies blot out your Iniquities*; plead that he would not divorce and reject you, would not *caſt you away from his Preſence*, nor *take his Holy Spirit from you*; that he would ſtill continue to be gracious, and *lift up the Light of his Countenance upon you*; plead with him to *create in you a clean Heart, and renew a right Spirit within you*; that by his Grace he would rectify what is wrong in your Souls, *heal your Back-ſlidings*, and form you

more entirely for himſelf. And indeed you will have Matter enough for Prayer and Petitions of this Nature, if you are in a right Frame, and have duly improv'd the foregoing Service.

7. It will be requiſite, that you next return to your *Diary*, and there write down ſuch Reſolutions as you ſee Reaſon to form upon this Occaſion. As for Inſtance, ſuch and ſuch Sins particularly I renounce for ever; by the Grace of God I reſolve to watch againſt them, ſtrive againſt them, and by all proper Means endeavour their entire Mortification.

And now alſo, you are to fix Rules for the better ordering your Converſation for the future, and with a ſpecial Eye to the ſeveral Heads before mentioned, *viz.* the Government of your Thoughts, Hearts and Affections; the Religion of the Cloſet, Family, Aſſembly, *&c.* As thus, I purpoſe through divine Grace, (1.) That I will watch over my own Heart better than I have done; will endeavour to watch and ſtrive more againſt thoſe Corruptions that are ſo potent there, my Pride, Worldlineſs, Envy, Malice and every vain Thought. (2.) That in the Cloſet I will be more faithful and take more Pains in cultivating my own Mind and converſing with God, allowing ſo much Time every Day for that End. And ſo with reſpect to other Matters; if you have Rules already preſcribed, with reference to theſe Things, now reviſe them with ſuch Additions as you may ſee reaſon for. And in all endeavour to bring your Heart to a Compliance therewith. All is to be founded upon the Holy Scripture, ſee that you conſent to the Law of God, and bring your Conſciences under the Authority thereof. Rules written in your *Diary* will ſignify little, unleſs alſo they be written in your Heart; but

but when they are ſo, you will be able to ſay, as *Pſal.* xl. 8. *I delight to do thy Will, O God!* Let me add;

8. Your next Work will be to give up your ſelves to God, and renew your Engagements to him. And here, as the Nature of the Thing requires, it ſhould be very ſolemn, ſerious and affectionate; (I mean your Self-dedication,) ſo the preſent Poſture of Soul will diſpoſe you to it. Eſpecially reſolve to avoid thoſe Sins you have been confeſſing, *the Sins* that have moſt *eaſily beſet you.* Pray, promiſe, vow, covenant againſt them. Reſolve upon a Life of entire Holineſs according to the Rules of the Goſpel; and particularly to walk and act according to the Rules you have juſt now fixt and agreed to. Only remember in all this your great Weakneſs and Infirmity, the Treachery and Deceitfulneſs of your own Hearts. And depend on the Grace of God and Spirit of God for Help and Aſſiſtance, and on the Merit of Chriſt for Acceptance. Reſign yourſelves and all into the Hands of God, and beg that he would take you under his Protection and Conduct; be *Surety* for you and that *for good*, and perform all your Works in you; *guide you by his Counſel, and hereafter receive you to Glory.* It only remains,

9. That in the Concluſion, you write in your *Diary* the Succeſs of your preſent Work; with ſuch Remarks and Reflections as the whole ſuggeſts, and as your own Hearts will direct you to. Thankfully own and acknowledge any Tokens of the divine Preſence, Help and Favour. Teſtify a juſt Senſe of the Defects of your Services, look for a Pardon of them through a Redeemer, and to be accepted for his Sake. It belonged to the Office of the High-Prieſt under the Law to *bear the Iniquity of the holy Things* of the Children of

Iſrael, Exod. xxviii. 38. This our Lord Jeſus does for his Church; leave therefore all your Duties in his Hand, and ſo conclude, committing yourſelves and your Work unto the Bleſſing of God.

And thus I have finiſhed what I propos'd on this Subject, have gone through the Buſineſs of a ſecret Faſt. And if you will ſo far improve what has been ſaid, as to reſolve upon the Duty I have recommended and opened, and undertake it accordingly, it will be the beſt Uſe and Improvement that can be made of this Diſcourſe. And I would beſeech you ſeriouſly to conſider, how much Occaſion you have for ſuch Work as this: Look into yourſelves, your Hearts, Lives, Cloſets, Families, *&c.* and you will ſoon be convinced how neceſſary it is, and upon tryal you will find it exceeding uſeful. I am ſenſible the neglect of it is one great Reaſon *Chriſtians* are ſo looſe and unguarded in their Walk, and ſucceed no better in their Profeſſion. O conſider your Duty, and for the future attend it with Care. You are *compaſſed about with a Cloud of Witneſſes*, who by their Practice invite you to it; imitate their Examples, and don't ſlight their Teſtimony. They that have gone before you in the way to Heaven, found Faſting and Prayer needful and profitable; and you ſhould uſe the ſame Means, as you hope for the ſame End. And indeed, unleſs you will be prevailed with to take ſome Pains with your own Hearts in your Oratories or Cloſets, examining them, admoniſhing them, and applying what is ſpoken in Publick, all the preaching in the World will ſignify nothing. You may commend Sermons, or find Fault with them, juſt as the Humour takes you, it is very much the ſame thing; all is loſt upon you,

you, except you will be perſuaded to turn Preachers to yourſelves; which is done moſt fully and effectually in, and by a ſolemn ſecret Faſt. Therefore defer this Duty no longer, nor object the Difficulty of the Performance. I know there are Difficulties in it; but put on Reſolution, and take it in the Aſſiſtance provided for you, and you may ſurmount them. As the Orator, when it was put to him, what was the chief Qualification of an Orator? *Pronunciation*, ſaid he: What the ſecond? *Pronunciation:* What the third? *Pronunciation.* So if you ask, how ſhall we overcome the Difficulty of this Work? I anſwer, firſt, by Self-denial; ſecondly, by Self-denial; thirdly, by Self-denial; learn to exerciſe that, and look up to your great Friend above, who can *make all Grace abound towards you*; remembring for your Encouragment what the Apoſtle has ſaid, Phil. iv. 13. *I can do all Things through Chriſt, which ſtrengthneth me.* O depend on him, and go about this Duty in his Strength, expecting, waiting and praying for his Help and Grace. And may a gracious God diſpoſe you to the Work, aſſiſt, accept and bleſs you in it.

PSAL.

PSAL. CXVI. 12, 13.

What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his Benefits towards me? I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.

CHRISTIANS ſhould not only have their Days of ſecret *Faſting*, but Days of ſecret Thankſgiving; not only Seaſons for private *Prayer*, but for private *Praiſe*; their *Feaſts* (if I may call them ſo) as well as *Faſts*; Days of holy *Rejoycing* and *Gratitude*, as well as of *Mourning* and *Supplication*. And therefore having recommended the one to you, I ſhall now touch upon the other from the Words I have read.

The fulleſt Account we have in Scripture of any one's private retired Devotion, is that of *David*. I need not tell you how much he was employed in ſuch Work as this; many of his *Pſalms* were his Meditations upon his Days of ſolemn and ſecret Thankſgiving; as the eighteenth *Pſalm* particularly; the Title of which runs thus; *A Pſalm of* David, *the Servant of the Lord, who ſpake unto the Lord the Words of this Song, in the Day that the Lord delivered him from the Hand of all his Enemies, and from the Hand of* Saul. It follows, *I will love thee, O Lord my Strength; the Lord is my Rock, and my Fortreſs, and my Deliverer; my God, my Strength, in whom I will truſt; my Buckler, the Horn of my Salvation, and my high Tower.* And ſo he goes on enlarging upon the Acts of his Providence,

dence, and triumphing in the God of his Salvation. And this was his uſual Practice. I will only obſerve, (which I offer as my Conjecture) that many of his *Pſalms* were compoſed upon one Occaſion. Many on the Account of *Saul*'s Perſecution of him, *Abſalom*'s Rebellion, *&c.* And 'tis not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe he had whole Days ſet apart for this Service, when he attended the Work in a more than ordinary Manner, exerciſing himſelf in Thankſgiving and Praiſe. And certainly, as God by his Providence calls us often to extraordinary Prayer, ſo he does no leſs, and as often it may be, call us to extraordinary Praiſe; when every Chriſtian ſhould with peculiar Solemnity ſay, *What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his Benefits towards me? I will take the Cup of Salvation*, &c. Where you have,

1. The *Pſalmiſt*'s grateful Reſentment of the kind Courſe of divine Providence. towards him, and the abounding Senſe he had of the divine Favours. *What ſhall I render to the Lord for all his Benefits towards me?* He owns God the Author of the great Things done for him; was convinced of his Obligation to love him, to praiſe him, to render to him; and ſeems at a Loſs how to expreſs his Gratitude, *What ſhall I render?*

2. You have his Reſolution hereupon: *I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord;* referring to the Practice of their *Feſtivals*, when they uſed to take a Cup, called the Cup of Deliverance or Salvation, becauſe after Bleſſing and ſetting apart they thereby commemorated the Deliverances and Salvations received. Now this was done either more publickly and openly in God's Sanctuary, as a Drink Offering according to the Appointment of the Law, *Numb.* xxviii. 7. or more privately in their own Houſes, in

in a ſort of Family Thankſgiving, when the Maſter of the Family firſt took the Cup of Salvation, and then was followed by all his Gueſts, who took it in their Places. And to this was added a Hymn of Praiſe or Thankſgiving ſuitable to the Occaſion; which it may be the *Pſalmiſt* here intends, when he ſays, *I will call upon the Name of the Lord.*

The Meaning in ſhort is, I will devoutly, ſolemnly, and in the beſt Manner I can, bleſs my God, celebrate his Providence, and give him Praiſe for what he has done for me; many are the Benefits which he hath confer'd upon me; I have vowed Returns of Praiſe and Gratitude; and now I will pay my Vows, (as he expreſſes it in the next Verſe;) *I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.* And hence, without taking any Notice of the Points more obvious in theſe Words, becauſe not ſo directly anſwering my Deſign, I would remark, *That it becomes Chriſtians to have their Seaſons of more ſolemn Thankſgiving, when they are to acknowledge divine Favours with ſpecial Devotion.* Now what I intend on this Subject is,

(1.) To hint at thoſe Seaſons of more ſolemn Thanſgiving.

(2.) To ſpecify the Benefits then to be acknowledged, as the matter of Praiſe on thoſe Occaſions.

(3.) To enquire into the Manner, wherein the Duty ſhould be performed. And

(4.) To urge and exhort you to attend and practiſe it.

I. I am briefly to hint at and point out the proper Seaſons of more ſolemn Thankſgiving.

And here, I muſt not omit to obſerve, that Days of publick Gratitude and Rejoycing are

Times,

Times, in the pious Exerciſes of which every ſerious Chriſtian ſhould be ready to bear a Part. The *Jews* had their anniverſary and monthly Feſtivals, or Days of Thankſgiving; and the Chriſtian Church has all along had ſomething of the like Nature, ſome ſtated, and ſome occaſional, as the Providence of God invited and led to the Work. Now at ſuch Times as theſe we ſhould concur with a chearful Zeal, and be always diſpoſed to throw our Mite into the publick Treaſury.

Every Lord's-day is alſo a Seaſon for this Purpoſe. This is the moſt proper Feſtival of the Chriſtian Church; and though it is not appropriated and confin'd to ſuch Service, yet it ſhould be very much employed therein. We are then to rejoyce in God our Maker and Redeemer, to celebrate the Memory of his Mercies; and it ſhould be our Endeavour on that Day to tune our Hearts for the Work of Praiſe. And tho' this be a little more general than what I aim at, and ſhall chiefly recommend, it ſhould not be thought impertinent. You may bring your Thank Offering to God's Courts for your particular Benefits, and preſent it to him; as by joining in the publick Praiſe of the Day, and accommodating ſeveral of the Thankſgivings to your own Caſe, adding by way of Supplement a few ſhort Parentheſes of Ejaculation. This may be and has been practiſed by ſome without any Interruption to their Devotion. The Petitions and Praiſes that are put up, every one ſhould make his own by actually offering them, and he may fit them to his own Caſe by ſuch Additions as the Matter requires.

Particular Perſons may have, and often I doubt not ſhould have, their Days of private Thankſgiving, when with more than ordinary Solemnity they

they acknowledge Benefits confer'd upon them. I mean Days kept by a Perſon in Conjunction with other of his Chriſtian Friends. When we have received ſpecial Mercies, we ſhould call our Brethren and Friends to aſſiſt our Devotion, ſpending ſome time in the ſerious Acknowledgment thereof. As this has been the way of many pious and good Men, 'tis what I would adviſe you to. Family Mercies, perſonal Mercies, any ſignal Favours of Providence ſhould be thus owned. I can with Certainty tell you this hath been the Courſe of ſeveral Chriſtians of the beſt Character, and I ſhould be glad to ſee more of it among us. Methinks there is ſomething exceeding beautiful in the Spirit and Behaviour of the primitive Believers, mentioned *Acts* ii. 42, 46. *They continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtle's Doctrine and Fellowſhip, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers*; and this they did *daily, and from Houſe to Houſe.* We ſhould thus continue in Fellowſhip and in Prayer and Praiſe, which I mention as one Method of more ſolemn Thankſgiving. How becoming Chriſtians would it be, when God hath favour'd you in any ſignal Inſtance, to invite your religious Neighbours to rejoyce devoutly with you, ſpending part of the Day in the grateful Acknowledgment of the Benefit? O that there were ſuch a Heart in us, and that God would revive this languiſhing Spirit of Devotion!

But what I have principally an Eye to here, and would chiefly propoſe to you, is a Day ſpent in Secret between God and your own Souls. This will afford the beſt and fitteſt Opportunity for the ſerious and moſt particular Performance of this Duty; 'tis the moſt proper Seaſon for the extraordinary Work of divine Praiſe. Over and above

the other Ways of expreſſing your Thankfulneſs already mentioned, I would recommend it to you, to have Days on Purpoſe for *Cloſet Thankſgiving*; your ſecret *Praiſe-days*, as well as *Prayer-days*, when with Hearts full of Love, Gratitude and holy Joy, you may recount the Mercies of God, and make ſuitable Aſcriptions to him. Which leads me

II. To take ſome Notice of the Benefits to be acknowledged as Matter of Praiſe and Thankſgiving on thoſe Occaſions. I muſt confine my ſelf here, and not launch out into ſo copious a Subject; ſo that I ſhall only remark a few Things with Reference to it. And

1. Let me obſerve, that ſometimes a variety of kind Providences invite to this Duty. Temporal and ſpiritual Mercies, perſonal and family Mercies, and a long Series of them loudly call upon us to acknowledge, adore, and bleſs the glorious Author. This there was in the *Pſalmiſt*'s Caſe in that ſolemn Thankſgiving of his, Pſal. cviii. 1, 2, &c. *Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bleſs his holy Name. Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits.* He adds, *Who forgiveth all thine Iniquities, who healeth all thy Diſeaſes, who redeemeth thy Life from Deſtruction, who crowneth thee with loving Kindneſs and tender Mercies; who ſatisfieth thy Mouth with good Things, ſo that thy Youth is renewed like the Eagles.* Here was a Multitude of Benefits the *Pſalmiſt* received, all which he unites in his Song, and which taken together, helped to fill his Heart with Gratitude, and his Mouth with Praiſe. So in our ſolemn Thankſgivings there may be many Themes, many glorious Inſtances of Divine Goodneſs and Mercy, to excite to and aſſiſt in the Work.

2. Some-

2. Sometimes a particular Favour or Benefit may be the ſpecial Occaſion of your Thankſgiving. A Mercy lately received, a ſignal eminent Mercy. It may be you were ſhaken over the Grave, and God has *delivered your Soul from Death, your Eyes from Tears, your Feet from falling.* It may be you met with ſome ſharp Conflict; violent Temptation, underwent Trials ſevere and ſhocking, like the Apoſtle, when all Men *forſook him; nevertheleſs,* ſays he, *the Lord ſtood with me, and ſtrengthned me,* 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17. God has directed you in Matters of Moment and Difficulty, wherein you were at a Loſs; proſpered you in your Affairs, enlightned your Path, guided your Steps, bleſſing the Work of your Hands, ſubdued a turbulent Paſſion, given a Victory over a threatning Corruption, and one way or other wrought ſome great Salvation for you. Now this is Matter of Praiſe; 'tis a good Reaſon for ſuch ſerious Buſineſs as I am propoſing, and will abundantly ſupply your Thankſgivings. Upon ſuch an Interpoſition of Providence, you are, as it were, ſummoned into the divine Preſence, have a new Song put into your Mouths, and are bid to take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.

3. I muſt alſo remark, that Works of this Nature may be very ſeaſonable and proper without ſuch eminent Calls of Providence. You may have ſufficient Occaſion for Praiſe, and ſufficient Matter for it, even when there is nothing more than ordinary in the preſent State of your Affairs. We ſhould now and then review the general Courſe of Providence, conſider how conſtant his Care, how kind, how gracious the Dealings of our God with us, and take Occaſion from thence to indite a ſolemn Song. *Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul,* ſays

the *Pſalmiſt, and forget not all his Benefits; having obtain'd help of God,* ſays the Apoſtle, *I continue unto this Day,* Acts xxvi. 22. We ſhould ſometimes reflect upon our whole paſt Life, and conſider what Mercy has fill'd it, what Goodneſs has followed us all our Days; and hereupon ſet our ſelves to celebrate the Praiſes of him, who *daily loadeth us with his Benefits.* Nor indeed is there any one of us that can want Reaſon for ſuch Employment, if he don't want an Heart to it; the God that has made you, that has redeem'd you from all Evil, that hath carried you as on Eagles Wings, that has made an Hedge about you, and about all that you have on every Side, the God in whom you live and move, and have your Beings, whoſe Mercy has pardon'd you, whoſe Goodneſs has ſupplied you, and who has perform'd all Things for you, certainly deſerves your Praiſe; and ſuch has been the Method of his Providence towards you, as demands the moſt devout Expreſſions of it. So that we are really called, and often called to ſolemn Thankſgiving, even without any extraordinary Appearances of Providence in our Favour. God has done, and doth ſo much conſtantly for all of us, that whether he goes out of his common Way to help us or not, the ſtated Courſe of his Proceedings challenges this Duty from us. I would farther remark,

4. That when any ſpecial Mercies and Benefits are the Occaſion of your Thankſgiving, you ſhould more fully and with greateſt Warmth inſiſt on theſe in your Diſcharge of that Duty. Take a particular Account of them, think them over before-hand, make an Eſtimate of them, and endeavour to get your Hearts deeply affected with them. You have the *Pſalmiſt* for an Example, in this Pſalm where my Text is. He ſpecifies his

Deliverance, and keeps his Eye upon it, through the whole thereof, *The Sorrows of Death compaſſed me about, and the Pains of Hell got hold of me, I found Trouble and Sorrow,* ver. 3. *Then called I upon the Name of the Lord;* ſays he, *O Lord, I beſeech thee deliver my Soul.* Upon which, *ver.* 6, 7, 8. he acknowledges his Deliverance, and the Hand of God therein; *I was brought low, and the Lord helped me; thou haſt delivered my Soul from Death,* &c. And in the ſame Manner he goes on through the Pſalm. In theſe Thankſgivings we ſhould endeavour to keep as cloſe to the Matter in hand as we can, and not ſpend time in Excurſions to Things remote, driving on ſome particular Deſign, and fixing upon the Subject that brought us into the divine Preſence. And yet,

5. Even when the Occaſion of our ſolemn Thankſgiving is particular, we ſhould not confine our ſelves wholly to that, but take in more generally the Benefits we have received from Heaven. Sometimes the devout Soul has his Days of Thankſgiving for Mercies in general, a Courſe of favourable Providences with which he is ſincerely affected, and then the Matter requires no Confinement; and when it is otherwiſe, when the Occaſion is ſpecial, *i. e.* when you are returning Thanks for particular Favours, you may and ought to extend your Praiſes farther. If it be asked now, what Benefits are moſt proper to be inſiſted on upon theſe Occaſions? I anſwer in a few Hints very briefly.

1. To be ſure the particular Mercies you profeſſedly undertake to bleſs God for, muſt have a fit Proportion of the Time you ſpend in this Exerciſe; whether they concern your Bodies, Souls, or both; your ſelves, Families, or both. Theſe you are to expatiate and enlarge upon, and

in

in the beſt manner that you can, turn into Songs and Hymns of Gratulation and Love.

2. It will be fit likewiſe to take Notice of the common Mercies of Providence, the whole Series of them. You are to bleſs God for your Being, Faculties and Capacities, *that he has taught you more than the Beaſts of the Earth, and made you wiſer than the Fowls of Heaven*; as it is, *Job* xxxv. 11. That he has made you rational, ſpiritual, immortal Creatures, capable of knowing, ſerving, and enjoying himſelf. You are to bleſs him for his early Care of you in your Infancy; and conſtant Supports and Supplies ever ſince: Thus *David*, when he was praiſing God for a particular Mercy, looks back to the firſt Inſtances of divine Goodneſs towards him, Pſal. xxii. 9, 10. *Thou art he that took me out of the Womb: Thou didſt make me hope, when I was upon my Mother's Breaſts; I was caſt upon thee from the Womb; thou art my God from my Mother's Belly.* This we ſhould own with Affection, not only in our common and daily Thankſgivings, but ſometimes more ſolemnly, thereby paying the beſt Tribute we are able to our great Creator and gracious Benefactor. In like manner you ſhould trace Providence through the entire Hiſtory of it. This will both furniſh you with Matter for more continued Thankſgiving, and diſpoſe you for the Service, keep up the divine Flame that ſhould run through the whole Performance. Bleſs him for outward Enjoyments, for Life, Health, Food, Raiment, Sleep, that by his conſtant Viſitation he has upheld your Spirits. Indeed theſe Things are Matter of daily Praiſe; but methinks they demand of us ſometimes more particular and formal acknowledgments; and it will become us in the Courſe of our Lives to have time ſet apart when we are to

addreſs our ſelves to this noble Work, and ſtir up all that's within us to aſſiſt in the Diſcharge of it.

3. Spiritual Benefits ſhould be copiouſly inſiſted upon. Such as are more common, that concern others with our ſelves, as the great Redemption by the Lord Jeſus; *God ſo loved the World that he gave his only Begotten Son*, &c. Let this Love be adored by your united Faculties; don't put him off with a tranſient Acknowledgment of the Mercy, but endeavour to get your Souls more fully poſſeſt with a Senſe of it, and more truly affected with it. Has God given his Son to ſave you from Death and Hell; and will you never ſet apart a Day or a few Hours to review and contemplate this great Work, and adore the Author? So the Enjoyments of a Church State, the Privileges of a goſpel Miniſtry. 'Tis ſaid of *Plato*, that he bleſſed God for three Things; namely, that he had made him a Man, that he was born in *Greece*, and lived in the Time of *Socrates*: And how much greater Reaſon have we to bleſs God, that we were born, not in *Greece*, a Land famous for human Learning; but in *Britain*, a Land of goſpel Light, the Valley of Viſion, where Chriſt has placed his golden Candelſticks and Walks in the midſt of them? Theſe, and ſuch like Mercies, all of them (and how great the Variety?) ſhould be diſtinctly remark'd on ſuch Occaſions.

4. The more ſpecial diſtinguiſhing Mercies of God ought to have a proper Place in your Song. As his *calling you by his Grace*, and *revealing his Son in you*. And here it will be proper to call to Mind, if you can, the Time and Circumſtances of this happy Work. The Apoſtle *Paul* was very particular in this Matter; he takes Notice of the

the Place where divine Grace reach'd him, in a Journey near *Damaſcus*; the time when (very preciſely) about Noon, the Manner of the divine Manifeſtation, *ſuddenly there ſhined round about him a Light from Heaven*, Act. ix. 3. And how affectionately doth he elſewhere mention the Ignorance and Enmity of his former State, out of which God had mercifully called him. I was *a Blaſphemer, a Perſecutor, and injurious; but I obtained Mercy, and the Grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant*, 1 Tim. i. 13, 14. Upon which he adds, Ver. 17. *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be Honour and Glory for ever and ever.* Amen. You ſhould remember what God has done for you, both in your firſt Converſion, and in all after Expreſſions of his diſtinguiſhing Grace; reſcuing you out of Dangers, delivering you from Temptations, ſanctifying his Ordinances or Providences to your Admonition, Quickning, Eſtabliſhment and Improvement in Religion. Make a Catalogue of theſe Mercies, that upon theſe Days they may be made uſe of to aſſiſt and enliven your Devotion. I will only add,

5. If there be any eminent Favours you have received, any remarkable Eſcape from Ruin and Deſtruction of Soul or Body, any ſpecial Advantage to your ſpiritual Intereſt, let this be always brought in among the Benefits you acknowledge at ſuch a time. You ſhould never forget that great Mercy, whatever it is; but retouch it time after time. Something of this we may obſerve in the *Pſalmiſt*'s Practice; otherwiſe one can't tell how to account for it, that he ſhould have ſo many Pſalms upon one and the ſame Occaſion, as was obſerv'd before. After he had once acknowledged God for this or that great Salvation, or

particular Favour, he does it again; and ſtill ſome time after his grateful Muſe returns to the ſame Subject, renewing his Praiſe, and giving Thanks for it again. And thus ſhould we do; though there may be a great deal of Mercy throughout the general Courſe of your Life, yet 'tis likely there is ſome extraordinary and diſtinguiſhing Mercy which calls for a more particular and frequent Notice and Mention, and this ſhould never be forgot on your Days of Thankſgiving. Thus I have hinted at the Matter of your Praiſe and Gratitude, the Subjects you are to inſiſt upon; and now,

III. I am to enquire into the Manner of this Duty. And as it is a more ſolemn, ſecret Thankſgiving this Diſcourſe chiefly concerns, the Directions muſt be more eſpecially fitted to that: And

1. When you are addreſſing your ſelves to this Work, fix the Method and Order of it. This is neceſſary, that you may not loſe time in ſettling the Buſineſs to be done, nor be confuſed in your Service. To help you herein, I will only offer you a few brief Hints, becauſe you may apply to the preſent Caſe, with a little Alteration, the Directions I have given for the Management of a Faſt. Let thoſe then that need, and are willing to accept ſuch Aſſiſtance, proceed in the following manner.

Make Choice of the moſt proper Seaſon for the Work. Chuſe a Day of Leiſure, that is likely to be moſt free from Diverſions and Incumbrances of every Kind. And in this Choice Regard muſt be had to the State and Temper both of the Body and Mind. If the Spirits are entangled and in Diſorder; if the Mind be diſturb'd and out of Frame, you will not be capable of diſcharging

charging the Duty with Comfort and Advantage. Therefore fix upon a Time, when all Circumſtances both of your Perſons and Affairs, may concur to facilitate and help forward your Deſign.

Prepare your ſelves for the Undertaking. It may be of Uſe the Evening before your Thankſgiving-day to beſtow a few Thoughts, and put up a few Petitions with Reference thereto: And when you are ſetting about it, begin with Prayer, in which you are to be peculiarly ſerious and importunate; beſpeaking the divine Regards, and begging the divine Help; nor ſhould you deſiſt till you have got the Soul in Tune and Temper for what you have in Hand; your Minds compoſed, Affections raiſed, and Hearts ſet right and fix'd; endeavour that all vain Thoughts, worldly Thoughts, whatſoever might diſturb and diſtract you, may be diſcharged and laid aſide, that ſo you may be at Leiſure to attend this Service. Let this be your Care before you engage in it, and take Pains with your ſelves in order hereto. With ſome it will be no great Difficulty, others may find it a Matter of Labour; and whatever is neceſſary, (more or leſs) for preparing the Heart and bringing it into Frame, ſhould be done; otherwiſe you will be like one that attempts to play on his Inſtrument before 'tis ſtrung and tuned.

In the next Place, note down the Occaſion of the preſent Service. And here you are to take Notice of the particular Favours and Benefits you are to expreſs your Thankfulneſs for, and mark them under diſtinct Heads; as thus, *having determined this Day to ſpend ſome time in ſolemn Thankſgiving to God, thereby to raiſe a Monument of Praiſe to him, and pay a ſmall Acknowledgment to my great and kind Benefactor, I deſire in the beſt manner I am*

able to touch and enlarge upon the ſeveral Mercies and Indulgencies of Providence towards me; Lord help me by thy Grace. And upon this you are to enumerate the Benefits you have received, taking particular Notice of ſuch as are the ſpecial, immediate, direct Occaſion of the preſent Exerciſe: You are to ſet them down (I ſay) in different Claſſes, that you may in a regular methodical manner go over them in your Thankſgivings; hereby you will be ſupplied with proper Matter, and be preſerved from that Confuſion you will otherwiſe be in Danger of running into.

It will be adviſeable after this to meditate a while upon the ſeveral Particulars before you; peruſe them, and conſider them, till your Minds are ſuitably affected and impreſſed. And indeed ſuch a general View, ſuch a full Collection of divine Favours to you, in the whole Courſe of your Lives, and in any ſpecial Inſtances, with ſuch Strictures and Reflections upon them, as your Circumſtances may lead to, will tend very much to ſtrike the Affections and raiſe the Soul to a becoming Pitch of Devotion. You will hereupon be ready to find with the *Pſalmiſt*, that your *Heart* is *hot within* you, and that *while* you are *muſing*, *the Fire burns*, Pſa. xxxix. 3. And then,

Proceed to your Knees, and run through the Catalogue of Mercies you have prepared in an affectionate Thankſgiving. Inlarge upon every Head as pertinently and fully as you can. Say, *Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all*, forget none of all *his Benefits*; recite them, acknowledge them, and praiſe the Author. And here, if the Heart be in Frame, and you have competent Skill in the Work, a great many Circumſtances will be taken in, as the Freeneſs, Variety, Seaſonableneſs and Surpriſe of the Mercies you are giving Thanks for,

for, with your own Unworthineſs of 'em. All theſe will be taken Notice of, and help to ſpirit your Devotion.

Having made your Acknowledgments to God, it will be ſeaſonable to look over your Liſt again; to contemplate the ſeveral Mercies there recorded, to conſider the Greatneſs and Importance of 'em, what Returns God expects from you on their Account, what particular Repentance his Goodneſs leads to. And no Queſtion a devout ſerious Perſon will now find a great many pious, good Reſolutions forming in himſelf, as the Iſſue of the Exerciſe ſo far. All which it will be proper to ſet down in Writing.

Upon this, return again to your Knees; and there make Confeſſion of Sin, of your utter Unworthineſs of theſe Favours with which God has bleſſed you. Acknowledgments of paſt Unthankfulneſs and Unfruitfulneſs, and Expreſſions of the ſerious Reſolutions you have form'd; together with ſolemn Acts of Self-reſignation, and ardent Breathings after God, after more of his Grace and Spirit, may imploy you a conſiderable Time.

This further Addreſs to God being ended, during your next Pauſe you may exerciſe your ſelves in Meditation, in ſinging with a low ſuppreſs'd Voice a pertinent Hymn or Pſalm, in fixing Rules of holy Living, and preſcribing to your ſelves particular Meaſures of Gratitude; as thus, *I have this Day taken the Cup of Salvation, and called upon the Name of the Lord. O my God, what ſhall I render to thee for all thy Benefits; I purpoſe by thy Grace to perform my Vows, and do ſome acceptable Service for thee; particularly thus, and thus will I do. O grant me needful Aſſiſtance from above.* And here I beg of you to obſerve, that you cannot offer a more

more acceptable Sacrifice to God than the Death of your Luſts; reſolve (by the help of divine Grace) upon the Mortification of ſome or other Iniquity, of all your Iniquities; eſpecially ſuch as you are moſt inclin'd to and in Danger of: Reſolve to reform in this or that Inſtance, wherein a preſent Reformation is moſt wanted, and will be moſt ſeaſonable; reſolve to ſet about this or that neglected Duty, and remember, that with Acts of Piety towards God, Acts of Charity, and Beneficence towards Men, are due from us on theſe Occaſions,

And laſtly, you ſhould conclude all with Prayer to God, renewing your Praiſes at the ſame time; committing your ſelves again to him, and adding ſuch Notes and Remarks in your Diary as the Occurrences of this Day or Seaſon may require of you.

Thus I have briefly deſcrib'd the Proceſs of a ſolemn Thankſgiving, given you ſome Account of this Service, and ſhewn you how to perform it; however, without confining any to this Method, but leaving every one to be directed by his own Obſervation and Experience in that Matter.

2. As to the Temper of Mind, (the inward manner of performing the Duty) ſee that it be done with a full Conviction of the Hand of God in all your Mercies. *Every good Gift, and every perfect Gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights*, James i. 17. All is from God: They are *his Benefits*, as the *Pſalmiſt* expreſsly ſtiles them in my Text; he is the Author of 'em. And I recommend it as a Matter of the laſt Importance in this Particular, that you give Thanks with a Conviction, a ſincere Conviction of this. 'Tis God that ſaves, that delivers, that upholds, that ſucceeds and enriches you; 'tis God that directs

directs, ſupplies, and has done all for you; and you ſhould own this with as true a Perſuaſion of the Reality of the Thing, as if you ſaw your Mercies diſpenſed with a viſible Hand from Heaven. This I look upon to be a chief Foundation of acceptable Thankſgiving. While Perſons *ſacrifice to their own Nets, and burn Incenſe to their own Drags*; and are ready to boaſt, as he of old, *this is the great Babylon that I have built*; while they aſcribe their Benefits to themſelves, to their own Care and Providence, to their own Wiſdom and Contrivance, they want the chief Motive and Argument to Praiſe, the very Heart and Soul of Gratitude. Eye God therefore in all the Benefits you have received: Religion teaches you to do ſo. Pious and good Men have always own'd his Influence in the Favours vouchſafed to them; and the Duty before us abſolutely requires this Senſe of Things.

3. The whole Duty ſhould be performed with great Humility. Indeed this Temper of Mind is neceſſary to our being at all thankful, (truly ſo) as well as 'tis neceſſary in our Thankſgiving. 'Tis preſuppoſed to Thankfulneſs, and ſhould be an ingredient in it. Never was holy *David* more devoutly thankful, than when in that Poſture of Humility you find him, 1 Chron. xvii. 16. *And* David *ſaid, what am I, O Lord God, and what is my Houſe, that thou haſt brought me hitherto?* He admires the divine Condeſcenſion to him, that God wou'd thus favour one ſo mean and undeſerving. When you ingage in this Duty, labour for a deep Senſe of your own great Unworthineſs, endeavour to ſpeak in *Jacob*'s Stile, and to ſpeak it from the Heart, *I am not worthy of the leaſt of all thy Mercies*, Gen. xxxii. 10. This will help you more duly to eſtimate the Benefits you receive, and fill your

Souls with more abundant Gratitude. A proud Man can never be a thankful Man; he overlooks and undervalues the Mercies afforded him; he thinks too well of himſelf to think juſtly of his God, and juſtly of the Providence that attends him and adminiſters to him. Cheriſh therefore an humble Opinion of your ſelves. *'Tis of the Lord's Mercy, that we are not conſumed,* ſays the Church, *Lam.* iii. 22. 'Tis Mercy that preſerves our Bodies from the Grave, and our Souls out of Hell, undeſerved Mercy and Grace; this we ſhould endeavour to believe, and accordingly expreſs a becoming Senſe of it in our Returns of Praiſe.

4. Be hearty and affectionate in all your Thankſgivings, eſpecially in the more ſolemn Acts thereof. God required the Fat and the Inwards in the Sacrifices of old, to teach us that in our moral and goſpel Sacrifices we ſhould ſerve him with our beſt, and exert all our inward Powers. Thus the *Pſalmiſt* calls upon *all that* was *within* him to *bleſs* God's *holy Name.* And again, *I will praiſe thee, O Lord, with my whole Heart,* Pſal. ix. 1.

We ſhould unite our Faculties in this Work, eſpecially on theſe more ſolemn Occaſions; to which Purpoſe there ſhould be not only Preparation, but great Watchfulneſs and Attention during the whole Service. If the Heart withdraw, all ceaſes. The Labour of the Lips is but a *bodily Exerciſe* which *profiteth little.* And then the Affections ſhould be raiſed and kept up thro' the whole Solemnity, as far as we are able. I grant they are not the great Things God looks at either in Prayer or Praiſe, but the Exerciſe of 'em is comfortable and uſeful. And ſince he has given us Affections and Paſſions for great and valuable Purpoſes, where can they be better employed than

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in ſuch Service as this? How often are we affected in the lower Concerns of Life; touch'd with Grief, Sorrow, Exultation, and Joy? And why ſhould not theſe Affections be made to ſerve the greater Buſineſs of Religion, and engaged therein? 'Tis certain the *Pſalmiſt* did not exclude the affectionate Part of Devotion, when he ſummoned all within him to join in it. O let us endeavour, that all within us may concur in ours. We ſhould weep in Praiſe, as well as weep in Prayer.

5. Own and honour Chriſt the Mediator in your Thankſgiving. This may be done two Ways chiefly; namely, by acknowledging that your Benefits come thro' his Hands, and by committing your Praiſe into his Hands, *ackrowledge that your Mercies are derived through him*, that they are of his Procurement, and are diſpenſed on his Account. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, ſays the Apoſtle, *who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual Bleſſings in heavenly Places in Chriſt*, Epheſ. i. 3. And I add; not only ſpiritual, but temporal Bleſſings, come through him, which we are to confeſs in our Praiſes, and accordingly to honour the Son, as the Procurer of them. And then further, we are to *commit our Praiſe and Thank-Offerings to his Hands*, looking for *Acceptance in the Beloved*, and in him only. This is required in that Rule of the Apoſtle, both in general and in particular, with Reſpect to the Matter before us. Col. iii. 17. *Whatever ye do in Word or Deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jeſus, giving Thanks to God and the Father by him*. Plead his Name therefore, depend on his Sacrifice and his Interceſſion, when you are approaching God's Altar with your Thank-Offerings; remembring that he has the Incenſe that muſt perfume them and render them grateful above. Once more,

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6. Not only ſpeak but reſolve to live the Praiſe of God, and make your Acknowledgments with ſuch a Reſolution. Look upon the many Mercies you have received as ſo many Ties to your Duty, and Obligations to Obedience. We ſhould turn every Benefit into Thankſgiving, and expreſs our Thankſgiving in our Lives and Converſations. What the Apoſtle *James* ſays of Faith, *ſhew me thy Faith by thy Works*, may be applied to this Caſe; ſhew me thy Gratitude by thy Life and Practice. This is what God expects from us, and what all our Thankſgivings ſhould iſſue in, or they are but mere formal Hypocriſy, and we are but like *ſounding Braſs and a tinkling Cymbal*, even when employ'd in the higheſt Strains thereof. It was a good Note of *Auſtin*, *Canticum novum & vetus Homo male concordant*; agreeable to which is that of *Solomon*, *Excellent Speech becometh not a Fool*, Prov. xvii. 7. The Sinner is a Fool, and Praiſe the moſt excellent Speech, which indeed loſes its Grace and Excellency in ſuch a Mouth. On the other Hand, *Praiſe is comely for the Upright*, Pſal. xxxiii. 1. And while we honour God with our Lips, and celebrate his Perfections, Providence, and Grace in our Songs, we ſhould ſhew forth his Praiſe and Excellencies in a Life of entire Devotedneſs to him. Thus when the *Pſalmiſt* had been taking the Cup of Salvation, and calling upon the Name of the Lord, employing himſelf in ſolemn Acts of divine Praiſe, he cries out, *O Lord, truly I am thy Servant, I am thy Servant*, Pſal. cxvi. 16. Thus ſhould we reſolve on the like Occaſions, and thus ſhould we perform. Every Mercy ſhould be improved in this Manner; and when we take a Review of the Favours we have received from Heaven, conſider them in their Compaſs and Latitude, and undertake a ſolemn Thankſgiv-

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ing on ſuch an Account, it ſhould be with a ſpecial Regard to Practice. *Thou haſt*, ſays the devout Soul, *done thus and thus for me, looſed my Bonds, delivered my Soul, ſupported me under Difficulties and Tryals, and ſaved me from my Fears: Lord, I am thy Servant, henceforth I purpoſe to love thee more, and ſerve thee better.*

And thus I have ſhewn you in what Manner this Duty is to be gone about and performed, how you ſhould take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord. It only remains now,

IV. That I exhort and preſs you to attend this Duty, to diſcharge it, and abound therein more and more. Endeavour for a grateful Temper, be often and much in Thankſgiving, and on fit Occaſions have your Times of more ſolemn and extraordinary Gratitude and Praiſe. This is what I would earneſtly recommend to you and perſuade you to. 'Tis ſo great a Duty, and yet I am afraid ſo much neglected, that an Admonition cannot but be ſeaſonable, and I heartily wiſh it would pleaſe God to concur with it, and make it effectual. Let me ſet before you a few Conſiderations, with which I ſhall conclude this Subject.

1. God has diſtinguiſhed us with Capacities and Powers on Purpoſe for this Service; has advanced and ſet us above other Creatures; and given us Faculties, the Excellency of which appears in nothing more than in their enabling us to conceive of the Glories and to celebrate the Praiſes of our great Creator, which is the proper Uſe and Improvement we ſhould make of them; and ſince they were given for this very End, it certainly follows, that we ſhould employ them in this Manner, God expects that we do ſo, and 'tis our reaſonable Service; on which Account we ſhould

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each of us be disposed to take up the *Psalmist's* Resolution, and say, *while I live, I will praise the Lord; I will sing Praises unto my God, while I have any Being*, Psal. cxlvi. 2.

2. This is a Duty frequently enjoin'd and urged in the Word of God. It was appointed as part of their daily Service under the Law, and inculcated by the Prophets in their Sermons. Thus in the fiftieth Psalm, after the Case of Sacrifices had been stated, and God had told them of how little Account that Service was in itself, he puts them in Mind what it was he demanded as of perpetual Obligation, in *ver.* 14. *Offer unto God Thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the most High.* This is a standing Duty, an unchangeable Duty, required before the Law, and under the Law, and I need not tell you how much it is insisted upon under the Gospel, Eph. v. 3, 4. *But Fornication and all Uncleanness or Covetousness, let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh Saints; neither Filthiness, nor foolish Talking, nor Jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of Thanks.* The Apostle first hints what is to be avoided and shunned, as a Disgrace to the Christian Name and Profession; and then signifies how it becomes Christians to have their Tongues and Hearts employed. And elsewhere he says, *rejoice evermore; in every thing give Thanks*; and adds, *for this is the Will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you*, 1 Thess. v. 16, 18. We are always to retain a Thankful Temper of Mind, and to be often actually expressing it; this is the Command and *Will of God in Christ Jesus.* And you know 'tis made the Character of a sincere *Christian* that he endeavours to comport with the Will of God in every thing. *Then shall I not be ashamed* (says David) *when I have Respect unto all thy Commandments*, Ps. cxix. 6.

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This has been the Practice of good Men, and is recommended to us by their Example. Indeed it has been the Practice of the whole Church of God from the beginning of the World; witneſs their Euchariſtical Sacrifices, which were in uſe from the Creation. *Cain* and *Abel* brought their Thank-Offerings, and ſo did *Adam* their Father no queſtion, by whom (we may ſuppoſe) they were inſtructed in this part of Religion. And we find afterwards amongſt the *Jews* this kind of Sacrifices conſtantly uſed by the ſpecial Appointment of God himſelf. And I am perſuaded there never was a true Believer, a devout good Man, but kept up intercourſe with Heaven this way; read the Book of *Pſalms*, and you will eaſily be convinced as to *David* and others concerned in thoſe Compoſures. How did they abound in Praiſe? every remarkable Providence you may obſerve called them into the divine Preſence, and put them upon inditing their ſacred Hymns. *Seven times a Day* (ſaith he) *do I praiſe thee*, Pſal. cxix. 164. And yet he goes further, *Pſal.* xxxiv. 1. *I will bleſs the Lord at all Times; his Praiſe ſhall be continually in my Mouth.* And this has been the way and manner of the beſt and moſt devout Perſons in all Ages. How much the Apoſtles and good Men of the Primitive Church delighted in this Work, and exerciſed themſelves therein, may be inferr'd from the Behaviour of two of them, even when their Circumſtances were melancholy and diſcouraging enough; they were in Priſon, and yet you read that *at Mid-night* Paul *and* Silas *pray'd and ſang Praiſes unto God*, Acts xvi. 24, 25. That they ſhould pray in that Diſtreſs is no wonder; but you ſee they praiſed God too. And this has always been the Spirit of the

beſt *Chriſtians*. O learn of them; let the ſame Spirit be in you.

4. Conſider how much the Providence of God invites to this, and challenges it as due from you. How many your Mercies? View them from your Birth to this Day, and what a thick Cloud will they appear to be? and then how conſtant? God *daily loadeth us with his Benefits*, as it is expreſt *Pſal.* lxviii. 19. His *Mercies are new every Morning*. And ſhall there be no returns for his Favours? will you bury them all in Forgetfulneſs and Unthankfulneſs? I may add, as a further Motive to the Duty, the ſpecial diſtinguiſhing Mercies which as *Chriſtians* you have received; thoſe Acts of ſovereign Grace towards you which belong to the Hiſtory of your Life; your effectual Calling, the divine Supports, Supplies and Conduct ever ſince, the Privileges of God's Covenant, the Senſe of his Favour, the Help of his Spirit, and Hopes of Heaven; O what loud Calls are theſe to Thankſgiving and Praiſe! Shall we receive ſuch exceeding great and precious Promiſes and Privileges, and not live a Life of Praiſe and Gratitude? nay, never in our Life ſolemnly attempt the Work I am exhorting to. There is ſomething in our State as *Chriſtians*, that more than ordinarily urges to this Duty, ſo that I may ſay as the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xxxiii. 1. *Rejoyce in the Lord, O ye Righteous, for Praiſe is comely for the Upright*. Such Perſons ſhould eſpecially rejoyce in God; whatever others do, they have abundance of Reaſon for this Exerciſe, there is a Decency and Becomingneſs in their Praiſe, it ſuits their State, and is what both God and Men expect from them.

5. It is a ſpecial Means of keeping up Intercourſe and Communion with God. It may be, in nothing do we enjoy God more fully and properly,

perly, than in acts of ſolemn Praiſe and Thankſgiving; hereby, at leaſt, we return him his Favours, I mean, ſome Tribute for them, and anſwer the end of his Providence in them. *I will deliver thee*, ſays God, *and thou ſhalt glorify me*, i. e. *Praiſe me*, Pſal. l. 15, 23. As Streams lead to the Fountain, ſo ſhould divine Benefits and Favours lead to God himſelf; and when theſe Streams of his Bounty excite our Gratitude, we are led to him thereby; and the Converſe between him and us is maintain'd that thoſe Favours were deſign'd to promote, nor do we, (I ſay) enjoy God more and taſte more of his Favour in any Duty than in this. O *Chriſtians*, try a Life of Praiſe and Thankfulneſs, you will find a little Heaven in it; it will ſweeten the Cares, Toils and Troubles of your preſent Warfare; and will give a Joy unſpeakable, will anoint your Head and cauſe your Face to ſhine.

6. The regular conſcientious Diſcharge of this Duty will prepare you for more and greater Mercies. *To him that hath*, and is thankful for what he hath, *ſhall be given*; in which Senſe, I think, the Promiſe may be apply'd as juſtly as any other. Men will not venture Seed on barren Ground; but where they hope to reap plentifully they will ſow. And no queſtion it will hold true in the Method of the divine Conduct towards us; when God ſees his Benefits excite our Love, Gratitude, Praiſe, that we take notice of his Favours, own and adore his Hand, he will open it the more liberally. Let a Senſe of Intereſt therefore as well as Duty engage you in this Work. We loſe many Benefits we might have, for want of being ſufficiently thankful for thoſe we have.

7. The Neglect of this Duty, particularly of more ſolemn Thankſgiving, eſpecially if it be

what we have promiſed in a time of Fear or Trouble, is very provoking to God, and often draws down ſome remarkable Rebukes. We often bind ourſelves to it when in Difficulties or in Dangers, and the Non-performance in ſuch a Caſe muſt render Perſons very guilty before God, and incur his Diſpleaſure. (*Jacob*, though the *Rabbins* call him *Votorum Pater*) forgot or delay'd to pay his Vows at *Bethel*; for which ſome think God puniſhed him afterwards in his Family. And thus, I doubt not, it has been with Multitudes ſince that time. O take care you don't by your Careleſſneſs herein forfeit the divine Favour! He can ſoon ſmite your Goard, and turn your Honey into Gall and Wormwood; and if he has anſwered your Prayers, heard you in the things you ask'd, and you neglect to render unto him ſuitable Praiſe and Gratitude, don't pay your Vows, you may expect he will teſtify againſt you, and bring you to his Foot by ſome ſharper and ſeverer Diſpenſation of Providence. In the laſt Place,

8. A grateful frame and temper of Mind is an excellent Preparation for Heaven, and moſt directly fits the Soul for it. I don't ſay, that Praiſe will there be our whole Work or whole Happineſs; but I queſtion not it will be a conſiderable Part thereof, and conſequently herein ſo far lies our Meetneſs for it. Let us therefore be much in Gratulation and Thankſgiving; enter upon the Work of Praiſe, the Work of Heaven, beforehand; be often eſſaying and attempting ſomething this way, and particularly in the more ſolemn Manner, ſetting Days apart for that Purpoſe. This will give the Mind an heavenly Tincture, and diſpoſe us for the Reliſh of Heaven, and for the Enjoyments of Heaven when we come there.

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In a Word, conſider theſe things; and if you have been defective in this Part, this eminent Part of the true Religion hitherto, now ſet about it in good earneſt. It may be ſome of you, I wiſh it may not be the Caſe of many of you, have never had a Day of ſecret, ſolemn Thankſgiving and Praiſe. O reſolve to live in the Omiſſion of the Duty no longer, apply to it with all convenient Speed and with all poſſible Seriouſneſs, retire into your *Oratories* and there ſay, *What ſhall I render to the Lord for all his Benefits towards me? take the Cup of Salvation and call upon the Name of the Lord.*

NEHEMIAH II. latter Part of the 4th Verſe.

So I prayed to the God of Heaven.

I Know not how it comes to paſs, but ſo it is, that what we call Ejaculatory Prayer is generally overlook'd by our devotional Writers, left out of their Books of Devotion, and out of thoſe that profeſſedly treat on the Subject of Prayer, and indeed but ſeldom mentioned in Sermons. Therefore the Apprehenſion I have of its Importance, Excellency and Uſefulneſs; the Comfort it affords *Chriſtians*, the Service it does them in a great Variety of Caſes, hath put me upon conſidering it, and endeavouring to recommend it to you; which I ſhall do in a ſhort Diſcourſe from the Words I have read: *So I prayed to the God of Heaven.*

In the firſt Chapter of this Book you have an Account of the affectionate Concern, this great and good Man *Nehemiah* expreſſed for *Jeruſalem*, when he heard of the Deſolations thereof. He received the uncomfortable Tidings while in the Court of the *Perſian* Monarch, and was ſuitably touched and affected with them. *I ſat down*, ſays he, *and wept and mourned certain Days, and faſted and prayed before the God of Heaven*, ver. 4. The Particulars of his admirable argumentative Prayer on that Occaſion, you have in the following part of that Chapter. After which you find him *in this*, miniſtring in his Office to the King; (for

(for he was Cup-bearer to *Artaxerxes*) when he diſcovered an uncommon Sadneſs in his Countenance, which it is likely he endeavoured to put off, as being eſteemed an Indecency, and Matter of Offence in ſuch a Preſence. But the Grief had ſunk too deep into, and taken too great Hold of his Mind, not to remain viſible in his Looks, notwithſtanding all his Endeavours to conceal it. So that the King obſerving him under Dejection, asks the Reaſon of it, which he acquaints him with; namely, that *the City, the Place of his Father's Sepulchres was laid waſte, and the Gates thereof conſumed with Fire,* ver. 3. Whereupon the King ſurprized him with an Act of Grace and Favour; *for what doſt thou make Requeſt?* ſays he, encouraging him to expect any Aſſiſtance he ſhould deſire, *q. d.* ask what thou wilt and it ſhall be granted; and then follow the Words of my Text, *So I prayed to the God of Heaven.*

He ſent up a ſudden and ſhort Addreſs to Heaven, by way of Ejaculation, this is evident from the Circumſtances he was in then; he had not Time for a ſolemn and continued Prayer, nor would he think it decent in the Preſence of ſuch a Perſon as he was then before; or indeed in any Company.

The Matter of his Prayer we are not told; he might pray for Direction what to ask; though it is more probable, he prayed for Favour and Acceptance with the King, with reference to what he deſigned to propoſe to him; that God would touch his Heart and incline him to grant the Requeſt he was about to make. To this Purpoſe we find him petitioning in the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter, *O Lord, proſper, I pray thee, thy Servant this Day, and grant him Mercy in the Sight of this Man.* And in the 8th *ver.* of this Chap-

ter, after he had laid this Matter before the King, he concludes, *the King granted me according to the good Hand of my God upon me.* Where he acknowledges the Favour of God in the Favour he received from the Prince, in whoſe Service he was employed. But whatever was the Subject of his Petitions, it is evident his Prayer is what we call Ejaculatory. And hence I ſhall obſerve, *that Ejaculatory Prayer is a Duty of excellent Uſe to Chriſtians, and is recommended to them by the Practice of good and devout Men recorded in Scripture.*

We have an Inſtance of it in the Text; ſo alſo in *Sampſon*, Judg. xvi. 28. *He called unto the Lord, and ſaid, remember me, I pray thee, and ſtrengthen me, I pray thee, only this once.* This was a ſudden and ſilent Requeſt, formed, and expreſſed, it is likely, in his Mind, and not pronounced aloud. In like manner *Jehoſhaphat* when in Danger from the *Aſſyrians* who compaſſed him about to kill him, *cryed out*, i. e. cried to the Lord in a ſhort Prayer, and it follows, *the Lord helped him, and God moved them to depart from him.* *Eliſha* at *Dothan* alſo prays thus, *Lord open the young Man's Eyes.* So *Jacob*, when ſolemnly bleſſing his Children, makes an Apoſtrophe, turns aſide to his God in an holy Ejaculation, *I have waited for thy Salvation, O Lord*, Gen. xlix. 18. And *Stephen*, when ſuffering Martyrdom, *Lord lay not this Sin to their Charge*; and, *Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit*, Acts vii. 59, 60.

So that you ſee this has been the Practice of devout Perſons in former times; beſides their ſtated and more ſolemn Addreſſes, they frequently ſent up to Heaven theſe tranſient Requeſts and pious Ejaculations. *So I prayed*, ſays Nehemiah, *to the God of Heaven.* He underſtood the Efficacy and Force of ſuch ſort of Sallies of Devotion, had been often exerciſed therein; he had frequently found

found how good it is to truſt in the Lord, and this way to ſeek to him in a time of need, and therefore readily upon this great and important Occaſion turns his Mind upwards.

In handling the Subject before us

I. I ſhall give a Deſcription of Ejaculatory Prayer.

II. Hint what is requiſite to the right Diſcharge of this Duty; and then

III. Shew when and upon what Occaſions it is more eſpecially proper and ſeaſonable.

I. I ſhall give you a Deſcription of Ejaculatory Prayer. And in general *it is a ſudden, occaſional, and ſhort Addreſs to God, by way of Petition, Confeſſion or Thanksgiving*; as preſent Circumſtances may require.

It is a *ſudden, occaſional Addreſs to God*; by which it is diſtinguiſhed from ſet ſolemn Prayer; which has its more ſtated Times and Seaſons. The *Chriſtian* has his Times of daily ſolemn Devotion; his Morning and Evening Sacrifices, when he enters into his Cloſet, ſhuts the Door, and prays to his heavenly Father. But this ſort of Prayer I am ſpeaking of, is not confined either with reſpect to Time or Place. It may be often, at any time, and any where. *Jehoſhaphat* prayed when in the Battel; *Nehemiah* when before his royal Maſter. When you are working, walking, converſing, at Home or Abroad, this ſort of Devotion is pertinent and proper.

It is *a ſhort Addreſs*, as well as ſudden and occaſional, not drawn out to the uſual length of fixed and ſolemn Prayer, doth not conſiſt of Confeſſions, Acknowledgments, Pleas and Arguments, as that doth; but is often finiſhed in a ſingle Requeſt, or at leaſt in a few ſhort and tranſient Petitions. *Lord remember me*, ſaid the Thief on the

the Croſs, *when thou comeſt into thy Kingdom*; a Prayer conſiſting only of one Petition, and yet an effectual prevailing Prayer, readily heard and anſwered.

I add, it is either *by way of Petition, Confeſſion or Thanksgiving*. Any of theſe may be the matter of an Ejaculatory Prayer. They that are acquainted with this Exerciſe, may obſerve their Hearts going out after God various ways. Sometimes acknowledging a Mercy or Favour received, as Direction in any Affair, Deliverance in any Danger, Help in a Duty, Succeſs in their Application to others upon any Occaſion of Moment. As thus; bleſſed be God that was with me; praiſed be his Name for this great Favour. And the like may be obſerved with reſpect to Confeſſion and Petition. O my God, how fooliſh was I in this or that Inſtance? I ſpake unadviſedly with my Lips. What undue Commotion was I in? What Pride, Vanity did I diſcover upon ſuch an Occaſion? ſo fooliſh and ignorant was I. Lord, pardon through the Blood of Chriſt. Now though ſuch Occurrences are proper matter of ſolemn Prayer, and are to be reflected on, or brought into the Duty of the Oratory or Cloſet; yet I reckon they will with ſerious devout Perſons have ſome Touches, ſome notice taken of them in this occaſional, tranſient way I am diſcourſing of. And this may ſuffice for the general Account of this Duty. I proceed therefore

II. To ſuggeſt what is requiſite to the right Diſcharge of it: What Principles, and what temper of Mind it ſuppoſes and requires. And

1. A firm belief of God's Providence is abſolutely neceſſary to this way of Intercourſe with him; a Belief that his Providence is ſovereign and ſupreme; that it is univerſal, reaching to all Perſons,

ſons, Things and Circumſtances of Things. This we are aſſured it doth, not a Sparrow nor Hair of the Head falls to the Ground without our heavenly Father. And this we muſt believe, or we ſhall not find ourſelves diſpoſed on all Occaſions to look up to him in this Duty. *Grant me*, ſaith Nehemiah, *that I may find Mercy in the Sight of this Man.* He believed and knew that the *Hearts of Kings were in the Hand of God, and that he turneth them whitherſoever he will*, otherwiſe he would have had recourſe to different Meaſures, and have overlooked God in the Affair depending. It is the great God that over-rules all Events, interpoſes in every Concern that can by a ſovereign Touch incline Hearts, our own Hearts and the Hearts of others, juſt as he pleaſes; and without a firm Perſuaſion of this, we ſhall never keep up that Correſpondence with him that the Practice of Ejaculatory Prayer implies; we want the Foundation and firſt Principle of the Duty.

2. A deep Senſe of our conſtant Dependence upon him is alſo requiſite. *Truſt in the Lord with all thine Heart*, ſays *Solomon, and lean not unto thine own Underſtanding; in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy Paths*, Prov. iii. 5, 6. To the ſame Purpoſe the Prophet ſpeaks, *Jer.* x. 23. *O Lord, I know that the way of Man is not in himſelf; it is not in Man that walketh to direct his Steps.* He that knoweth not this, who has not a thorough Conviction of it, will not every now and then be looking to his God for Conduct and Help, as his Caſe requires. Whilſt we think that we have a Sufficiency in ourſelves, whilſt we deny his ſpecial and immediate Providence, his ſpecial and inward Grace, his Concurrence with us in all our Affairs, no wonder that we *lean to our own Underſtandings*, rely on our own Strength,

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and ſo neglect God. Nor in any thing doth the Danger and Miſchief of that Doctrine appear more (the Doctrine that claims to Man a ſufficient Ability in himſelf, without the Aſſiſtance of divine Grace) in nothing, I ſay, doth the Danger of it appear more than in this, that it carrieth him to neglect his proper Dependence, and conſequently leaves him to his own Darkneſs, Weakneſs and Folly. I am miſtaken if ſuch as have embraced this Principle will employ themſelves much in Ejaculatory Prayer. This is a Duty that acknowledges *all our Springs are in God*; that it is his Power that protects us, his Wiſdom that guides us, and his Grace, and that alone that is ſufficient for us; and accordingly, as the Pſalmiſt expreſſes his Reſolution, *on God do we wait all the Day*, Pſal. xxv. 5.

3. It is further requiſite to this Duty, that we have a ſteady Faith in God, and believe his Ability and Readineſs to help and ſave. This the Pſalmiſt had, as is implied in that Expreſſion, *Pſ.* xvi. 8. *I have ſet the Lord always before me; becauſe he is at my Right-hand I ſhall not be moved:* He conſidered God not only as an Inſpector, but as παρασάτης, one ſtanding by him to back and ſuccour him in every time of Need. A devout *Chriſtian* that is often directing his Eye, and darting up his Requeſts to the Throne of Grace, has this Faith as a ſettled governing Principle in him. *Nehemiah* knew the God he worſhipped could bend the King's Heart to a Compliance with his Deſires; and *Jehoſhaphat* knew how imminent and great ſoever his Danger was, that God could reſcue him; and therefore he cries to him; and it was a glorious Inſtance of the divine Sovereignty, and of the Succeſs of a Believer's Prayer, that is there given; it is ſaid, the *Lord helped him*,

him, and moved them to depart from him, in the Place mentioned before. There is nothing that any of us want in any of our Dangers or Difficulties, but if we cry to God, look to him by Faith and Prayer, but he is able immediately to ſupply us: He can reſtrain the Power, and change the Hearts of others, calm our own Minds, rebuke the Tempter, and in a Word, *make all Grace abound towards us.* O let us believe and conſider this, and it will encourage our frequent Intercourſe with God in this way of Ejaculation.

4. I add, a divine ſpiritual Frame is alſo neceſſary to this Duty, and implied in it. He that would keep up this method of Converſe with God muſt be ſpiritually minded, and he that doth, it is an Argument he is ſo. *Let him kiſs me with the Kiſſes of his Mouth,* &c. *Cant.* i. 2. *him,* i. e. he who dwelleth in my Heart, whom my Mind was laſt upon, and is often ſallying out towards. And thus the pious Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* cxxxix. 18. *When I awake I am ſtill with thee.* Such a Frame of Mind, a Heart that follows hard after God, a ſtrong Biaſs and Inclination towards him is requiſite, if we would be fitted for, and skilled in this holy Exerciſe. And if we have ſuch a happy and bleſſed Frame of Heart, I dare ſay, we ſhall be often with God; often glancing towards him in a way of Devotion; beſpeaking his Preſence, calling for his Help, begging the pity of his Eye, the relief of his Hand; petitioning for the Pardon of ſuch Indecencies and Irregularities of Frame, as we find in ourſelves; for Grace to ſubdue vain, rebellious, ſinful Motions, and to rectify and govern the Mind. It may be a ſudden Thought of Pride, Vanity, Revenge, Envy, Impurity, darts into the Mind; upon which the holy, chaſte, devout Soul *prays to the God of Hea-*

veh, Lord forgive, Lord ſuccour, Lord cleanſe, ſanctify and guard. The Conſequence of which often is that all is ſet right, and the Heart kept pure and loyal to its God. If you know nothing of theſe things, you are very much to ſeek in the Myſteries of the ſpiritual Life: But if you know them, you underſtand the Doctrine I am upon in ſome Meaſure, and have theſe Principles, and experience what will furniſh you for the Practice of this Duty.

III. I promiſed to ſhew when and upon what Occaſions this kind of Prayer is eſpecially ſeaſonable and proper; when we are to uſe Ejaculatory Prayer. And in general, I ſay, it is ſcarce ever unſeaſonable; no Place, no Time, no Company, or Buſineſs is inconſiſtent with it, and needs to exclude it. The particular occaſions are ſo various and many that it is not eaſy to enumerate them. So that I ſhall only mention a few of the more proper and ordinary Seaſons of this Duty.

And one Seaſon of theſe divine Breathings and pious Ejaculations is in the Morning; when we awake, and when we riſe. We ſhould then lift up our Hearts to God, and acknowledge his protecting Providence. As thus; bleſſed be God, my kind Preſerver, for the Mercy of another Night. I have laid me down and ſlept; I have awaked for the Lord ſuſtained me. Lord keep me through this Day; preſerve and keep me from all Evil; and fit me for the Duty incumbent on me. May I be in the fear of the Lord all the Day long. Such Thoughts as theſe are exceeding proper to ſeaſon our Minds in the Morning, they are a good Preparation for more ſolemn Prayer, which we ſhould addreſs ourſelves to as ſoon as we can; and may have an Influence on the

the whole Day, and be a Means of ſanctifying the Occurrences of it.

The ſame Duty is alſo ſeaſonable at Night, when lying down, and diſpoſing ourſelves for Reſt. Lord, ſay you, be my Shield and Defence. Let thy Right-hand ſuſtain me, and underneath me be thy everlaſting Arms. May the Night be ſafe and my Reſt comfortable. If Sleep at any Time depart from me, may I remember thee upon my Bed, and meditate on thee in the Night-watches; and when I awake be ſtill with thee.

When we are going to the Place of religious Worſhip, and when actually ingaged in the Worſhip of God there; ſuch Thoughts, and ſhort Petitions may be very proper and uſeful. As thus, Lord help me to reverence thy Sanctuary. Open thou my Ears, and ſeal Inſtruction on my Heart. O write thy Laws there, and keep me cloſe to thy ſelf and my Duty. May I attend upon the Lord without Diſtraction. Send me a ſuitable Meſſage this Day, and make it of uſe to my Soul. Help my Memory, my Affections, and aſſiſt me in all the Parts of pleaſing acceptable Service. Such tranſient ſhort Applications to God will ſhew your dependence on him, and are an excellent Means of ſecuring his Preſence and Bleſſing. They alſo tend to awaken holy Watchfulneſs and Care, and to make you diligent and ſerious in divine Worſhip. Nor will it be improper while you are actually hearing or ſinging to intermix a few Ejaculations. As, Lord increaſe my Faith. Help me to mind and remember this. Fix this Word in my Heart as a Nail in a ſure Place. O may I experience this Truth, and apply to this Duty! Let me recommend this Practice to you. I cannot but pity thoſe dull unthinking Creatures, (Worſhippers I cannot call them) who come to

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the Aſſemblies of *Chriſtians* without any ſerious Thoughts, and without any evident Deſign of converſing with God; and accordingly their Eyes run to and fro through the Aſſembly, a careleſs Air ſits upon their Countenances, and often to the Reproach of themſelves and Affront of the Aſſembly, and eſpecially of the great Maſter of Aſſemblies; they lay down the Head and fall aſleep. We ſhould cite all our Faculties in ſo ſolemn a Work as divine Worſhip; and that we may do ſo, frequent Ejaculations are not improper.

When we are undertaking any thing of Moment, have before us Matters of Importance, either for the Body or the Soul; when we are perfecting and laying Schemes for the Management of our Affairs, or tranſacting with our Fellow-Creatures; we ſhould this way beſpeak divine Light, Conduct and Help. Thus *Nehemiah: So I prayed to the God of Heaven.* Either he wanted Wiſdom how to ask, or wanted an Intereſt in the Perſon he was making his Addreſſes to. And for this he beſought the Lord. An Example we ſhould endeavour to imitate in all the greater Concerns and Occurrences of Life, looking up to Heaven for ſuitable Direction and Aſſiſtance.

Further, this ſort of Prayer is alſo ſeaſonable in Company, eſpecially if we be like to meet with more than ordinary Temptation there. There is certainly a great deal of Danger, many Snares in bad Company. We muſt neither believe our own Experience, nor the Word of God, if we do not allow this. *Depart from me*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *all ye Workers of Iniquity*, Pſal. vi. 8. And again, *Pſal.* xxvi. 4, 5. *I have not ſat with vain Perſons; neither will I go in with Diſſemblers: I have hated the Congregation of Evil-doers; and will not ſit with*

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the Wicked. So Pſal. xxxix. 1. *I ſaid I will take heed to my ways, that I ſin not with my Tongue. I will keep my Mouth with a Bridle while the Wicked is before me.* And why ſo cautious? but becauſe he was apprehenſive of the Danger he was in of miſcarrying in ſuch Company. And though the looſe Profeſſors of our Day ſeem to have caſt off all Fear, and act under no manner of Reſtraint or Circumſpection in this Caſe; more tender *Chriſtians* find a Neceſſity of being upon their Guard here. Now what I am hinting is, that when caſt into ſuch Company, it is highly ſeaſonable to commit yourſelves to God by a ſerious Ejaculation, and beg his Protection and Preſence; that you may not ſpeak what you ought not, nor omit to ſpeak what you ought. Indeed in any Company this ſort of Devotion may be uſeful. We ſhould often requeſt that we may be kept from Sin, ſtirred up to our Duty; that we may not ſpeak to the Diſhonour of God, the Injury and Snare of others; receive harm from, or do harm to, any of the Company; or omit the Opportunity of Good that may offer; and that we may be capable of improving.

Allow me to add, that it is very ſeaſonable and neceſſary when we are about to adminiſter Reproof to others. It may ſometimes be proper to beg Direction and Wiſdom from God, by ſolemn Prayer, before we ſet about ſuch a Work, which ſhould be followed with repeated Ejaculations afterwards. As, that God would direct to an acceptable and effectual Word; would help us to ſpeak to the Purpoſe; and that he himſelf would ſpeak to the Heart of the Perſons we are concerned for. The Difficulty of the Duty both of giving and receiving Reproof calls for this, and

the Succeſs thereof may in ſome Meaſure depend upon it.

Again, it is a proper Seaſon for Ejaculatory Prayer, when under Temptations of any kind. When the Mind is clouded and ruffled, Paſſions raiſed, and the Heart diſordered; then frequent Ejaculations will have their Uſe. It is a good Rule, *obſta Principiis*, &c. oppoſe and check the firſt Motions to Evil; thereby you will more eaſily maintain your Innocency, and obtain the Victory; and the beſt way of doing it is by looking upwards, and ſeeking Grace and Strength from God in your time of need. Lord deliver me from this Evil; let me not be overcome of it; rebuke the Tempter; help againſt my Corruptions, and enable me to mortify and ſubdue them; leave me not to myſelf now, leſt I loſe my Purity and forfeit my Peace.

And in a Word, this Duty is ſeaſonable after the Receipt of any ſpecial ſudden Mercy; as an Eſcape from Danger by a Fall, or the like; help in any difficult Duty; and in ſhort, whenever we have Reaſon to think God has in a remarkable manner appeared for us. We ſhould immediately diſpatch a devout Acknowledgment. As thus, bleſſed be God for my Salvation, or Deliverance; Thanks be to God for this Inſtance of his protecting Care. Help me, O Lord, to ſpeak and live thy Praiſe.

Thus I have finiſhed what I propoſed on this Subject, have given ſome Account of the Duty, ſhewn you what is required to the right Diſcharge of it, and what are the proper Seaſons for it. And now I ſhall only add two Particulars, as the Application of what has been ſaid. And

1. I cannot but remark from hence, what a mighty Difference there is between one ſort of Men

Men and another; how different their Spirits, Hearts, and Frame. What a Tendency and holy Biaſs of Soul have ſome towards God; *praying always with all Prayer and Supplication?* Their Thoughts are fixed on him, their Hearts follow hard after him, in him they delight, upon him they live, and for him they wait. Of others it may be ſaid, that *God is not in all their Thoughts*; they ſeldom mention his Name but when they profane it; or call upon him unleſs it be by way of Imprecation. This manifeſt Difference there is between Men and Men. A good Argument that as they are animated, conducted and influenced by different Spirits, ſo they are deſigned for different Places. O endeavour for that frame of Mind that ſavours of God and Religion; that will lead you to an habitual Converſation with God: This will ſhew that you are born from above, and deſigned for above; and will be a Security to you that God will not gather your Soul with Sinners.

2. Make Conſcience of this Duty, endeavour to learn this divine Art, and ſo be skilful and conſtant in the ſpiritual Exerciſe. The Advantages of it are exceeding great, and may in part be inferred from what has been already offered. Nor ſhall I ſtand to enlarge much on the Head, but only hint a Particular or two, as a Specimen of what might be ſaid, and expatiated on.

It will be a good Means of preſerving the Mind in a ſpiritual and heavenly Frame, free from the Taint and Defilement of earthly Things. It tends to keep it near to God, and under the warm Influences of his Grace. And how great a Privilege this? It is part of the Bleſſedneſs of Heaven to dwell with God for ever, and to have conſtant Aſpirations after him. And the nearer

we approach to this State and Temper on Earth, the more of Heaven we enjoy at preſent.

It will engage the Preſence of God with you, for your Support, Defence, Direction, and all ſorts of Help, as your Circumſtances require. And if it does not ſecure you from the Violence and Aſſaults of ſpiritual Enemies, it will ſecure you the Victory over them.

It will be a Means of keeping your Hearts in frame and tune for the more ſolemn Duties of Religion. Ejaculatory Prayer will fit and prepare for ſtated and ſet Prayer, and other divine Services. He that is often converſing with God this way, will certainly be better diſpoſed for more ſolemn Approaches to him.

And in a Word, hereby your inward Peace, Comfort and Joy will be promoted.

Do not therefore neglect a Duty ſo eaſy, ſo profitable and ſo comfortable as this is. It will conſume no Time. It will hinder no Buſineſs; but moſt happily promote and ſucceed whatever you undertake. To conclude, this is one way of walking with God; of being in his Fear all the Day long. It is the Excellency of the Chriſtian Temper, the Improvement of preſent Grace, and Pledge of future Bleſſedneſs.

1 COR. xiv. 16.

Else when thou ſhalt bleſs with the Spirit, how ſhall he that occupieth the room of the Unlearned, ſay Amen at thy giving of Thanks, ſeeing he underſtandeth not what thou ſayeſt?

AS it is the peculiar Dignity and Excellency of Man, above the reſt of the Creatures in this lower World, that he is capable of religious Worſhip, of knowing, acknowledging and adoring, the God that made him, the Providence that ſupplies him, and the Grace that ſaves him; ſo there is nothing doth more concern us, than to be well inſtructed in the Nature of that Worſhip; that we may rightly improve the excellent Capacity God hath given us to his Glory and our own Comfort. Accordingly having ſpent ſome time, in directing you in the important Affair of Cloſet-devotion, what I aim at in this Diſcourſe is to aſſiſt you in one eminent Branch of public Worſhip, namely, Joint-prayer; which as it is an eſſential Part of divine Worſhip, ſo I am afraid it is as little underſtood, and as much miſmanaged as any.

In this Chapter the Apoſtle is cenſuring the *Corinthians* for the Abuſe of their ſpiritual Gifts, a great Variety of which God vouchſafed to the Church at that Time for the better Propagation of the Chriſtian Religion. Some had the Gift of Tongues, by which they could ſpeak

ſeveral Languages they had never learned; the Deſign of which was to enable them to preach the Goſpel to any People or Nation where the Providence of God caſt them. Some had the Gift of Prophecy, which lay not only in foretelling future Events, but in expounding the deeper Myſteries of Religion, and uttering by an immediate Afflatus or Inſpiration of the Spirit, Prayers and Hymns in their publick Aſſemblies. The firſt of theſe ſeems to have been a ſort of an Habit; he that had the Gift of Tongues could uſe it when he pleaſed; but the Prophet could exerciſe *his*, only when the Spirit came upon him, and as the Spirit gave him Utterance, his Gift was but occaſional, and depended upon the preſent Influence and Communication of the Holy Ghoſt.

Now the Fault of theſe gifted Teachers in the Church of *Corinth* was, that when they ſpoke from the ſpecial and extraordinary Influences of the Spirit, either in revealing Myſteries, expounding ancient Scriptures, or in Prayer and Pſalmody, they did it in an unknown Tongue; on which Account there was rather an Oſtentation of Gifts, than a right Improvement of them to the Edification of the Aſſembly. This the Apoſtle reproves them for, and reaſons againſt in the former part of the Chapter, and in the 13th ver. adviſeth, that every one who ſpake in an unknown Tongue, ſhould *pray that he may interpret*, i. e. either deſire he might be helped to ſay the ſame Things over again in a Language underſtood, or pray ſo as to interpret to others, make them apprehend the meaning of his Prayer, and conſequently explain to them, what the divine Afflatus hath imparted to him. Hereupon, in ver. 15. he lays down a general Rule for their Direction in this Caſe; *what is it then?* that is, what Courſe is

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to be obſerved in the Management of this Matter? Why, ſaith he, *I will pray with the Spirit, and pray with the Underſtanding alſo: I will ſing with the Spirit, and ſing with the Underſtanding alſo*; i. e. when I pray or ſing by a ſpecial Afflatus or Inſpiration, have Matter of Prayer, and Matter of Pſalmody ſuggeſted to me by the Spirit, I will take Care to expreſs my ſelf in a known Tongue; and in a Language that the Congregation underſtands, will pray and ſing ſo as to be underſtood.

And in the Text he gives the Reaſon, and ſhews the Neceſſity of acting agreeably to this Rule; *elſe when thou ſhalt bleſs with the Spirit, how ſhall he that occupieth the Room of the Unlearned ſay* Amen *at thy giving of Thanks; ſeeing he underſtandeth not what thou ſayeſt?* By occupying or filling the Place or Room of the Unlearned, is meant being one of that Number, according to that of the Moraliſt, *Thou muſt either hold the Place of a Philopher or of the Unlearned*, i. e. muſt either be the one or the other. The Unlearned therefore here muſt be the Uninſpired, ſuch as did not underſtand the different Languages in which thoſe Preachers expreſſed themſelves. By what follows, *viz. How ſhall he ſay* Amen *at thy giving of Thanks?* The Apoſtle means how ſhall he join with thee in divine Worſhip? How ſhall he aſſent to or go along with thee in thy Prayers or Praiſes? Thy praying in an unknown Tongue excludes him from any Part in the Service; he cannot ſay *Amen* to he knows not what.

Whether the *Bleſſing* and *giving Thanks*, which the Apoſtle here mentions, refers to Pſalmody, to Prayer, or the Euchariſt, (as Dr. *Hammond* ſuppoſes) I ſhall not diſpute. It will not be impertinent to my Purpoſe, however you take it; for if we muſt not praiſe God, or adminiſter the Sa-

crament of the Lord's Supper in an unknown Tongue, it is certain we muſt not pray in an unknown Tongue; and that for the ſame Reaſon, becauſe the Congregation cannot join with us. Nor do I queſtion but we may as juſtly refer the *Bleſſing* in my Text to the Duty of Prayer, as to any Thing elſe; Bleſſing of God (or Thankſgiving) being a very conſiderable and chief Part of Prayer, ſo that the Apoſtle's Argument lies here, that the Prayers of the Church ought to be in a known Tongue, that every one may be capable of joining therein; learned and unlearned are to ſay *Amen*; and conſequently muſt underſtand the Language in which they are offered up, that they may be able to do ſo. And hence let me obſerve,

That Prayer is a part of publick Worſhip, in which the whole Congregation, all that are preſent, ought to join in ſaying Amen. The Apoſtle makes it a Reaſon againſt the Practice he had been condemning, *viz.* praying in an unknown Tongue, becauſe the Unlearned could not ſay *Amen.* Which evidently implies that every one who fills a Place in worſhipping Aſſemblies, ſhould ſay *Amen*, or join in Prayer.

I ſhall treat this Subject in the following Method.

I. I will ſhew that Prayer is a part of publick Worſhip.

II. I ſhall endeavour to explain the *Amen* required in publick Prayer, or ſhew what it is to join therein.

III. I ſhall prove that the whole Congregation ought to join in publick Prayer; that it is the Duty of every one who attends publick Worſhip to ſay *Amen* to the Prayers put up. And then,

IV. I

IV. I ſhall enquire how this muſt be done, in what Manner the *Amen* is to be ſaid.

I. I will ſhew that Prayer is a part of publick or joint Worſhip. And I ſhall be but brief on this Head, becauſe as this is a Point agreed on, by all that have any publick Worſhip among them, ſo the large Diſcuſſion of it may ſeem a Matter rather of Curioſity than Edification. I would only obſerve that publick Prayer is an open Acknowledgment of God; of his Being, Attributes, and Providence; a Teſtimony of our Dependence, Gratitude, and the like; an Expreſſion of our Faith, Reſignation, Truſt, Obedience, and in general of the Homage, which as Creatures we owe to the great Creator.

And accordingly it has been the Practice of the Church of God from the Beginning of the World. We have not indeed a particular Account of the publick Worſhip of the Patriarchs; but we need not queſtion but *Adam* and his Sons, and all the reſt of the pious Perſons of thoſe ancient Times joined together in worſhipping God. *Cain* and *Abel*, we read, did ſo. And after the Apoſtacy of *Cain*'s Family, and their Separation from the true Church, there ſeems to have been a Revival of Religion, and eſpecially of publick Worſhip in the Family of *Seth*, Gen. iv. 26. *Then began Men to call upon the Name of the Lord*; that is (as many underſtand the Place) publickly, and in greater Numbers to worſhip and ſerve God, to join in ſolemn Aſſemblies for Devotion, of which Prayer, I doubt not, was a conſiderable Part, and conſtantly a Part; and therefore, ſaith the Text, *they began to call upon the Name of the Lord*. The very Light of Nature would direct them to own God in this Manner. And beſides there was a ſort of Prayer included in their ſacrificing,

ficing, and always joined with it. In ſome of their Offerings they acknowledged divine Favours and Benefits received: In others their own Sin and Guilt: And in both God's Dominion and Government. Nor is it unlikely that Prayer (in Words and Expreſſions) accompanied their Oblations. Among the *Jews* Prayer was ever allowed a Place in their publick religious Worſhip. Hence their Temple was an Houſe of Prayer, as *Solomon* intimates at the Dedication of it, 1 Kings viii. 33. *When thy People* Iſrael *confeſs thy Name, and pray, and make Supplication in this Houſe; then hear thou in Heaven*, &c. It was built and ſet apart for Sacrifice and Prayer, and was afterwards called *an Houſe of Prayer for all Nations.* And becauſe there was but one Temple, and all the People of *Iſrael* could not poſſibly join there at once, as in the ſame Aſſembly, they had their Synagogues; which were Places deſign'd on Purpoſe for reading the Law and publick Prayer; and beſides theſe, (as ſome think) *Proſeuchæ* or Oratories, ſtill more appropriate and reſtrain'd to Prayer.

I need not ſtand to tell you that the ſame Senſe of Things remained under the Goſpel Diſpenſation, and when the Chriſtian Religion came to take Place. 'Tis certain wherever there was a Church it was an Oratory; and that whenever the Diſciples of Chriſt met for publick Worſhip, Prayer was a Part of their Service. That thus it ſhould be, was intimated in Prophecy, Zach. viii. 21, 22. *The Inhabitants of one City ſhall go to another, ſaying, Let us go ſpeedily to pray before the Lord, and to ſeek the Lord of Hoſts; I will go alſo*, &c. The Prophet ſpeaks of the Times of the Goſpel, and ſignifies the Zeal and Forwardneſs of Converts to Chriſtianity, in joining in the Worſhip of God; which he expreſſes by *praying before him,*

and ſeeking the Lord of Hoſts. And 'tis obſervable, that the excellent Platform of Prayer Chriſt gave his Diſciples ſuppoſes a joint Performance of the Duty. *Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c. implying that more than one were to put up the ſame Petitions; and that his Diſciples ſhould pray together in Societies and Bodies.

And thus the Church of Chriſt has practiſed all along. *Juſtin Martyr* (a very early Father) in the Account he gives of the Worſhip of the primitive Chriſtians, which is the moſt ſimple and plain of any extant, tells us, that upon the Day called *Sunday* there was a meeting together of all the Chriſtians, that lived either in Town or Country; upon which Occaſion the Writings of the Apoſtles and Prophets were read as time would allow; when the Reader had done, he that preſided delivered in a Speech an Exhortation to the People; *after this we ſtand up*, ſays he, *and pour out our Prayers*.

So that, I think, I may conclude without any further arguing, that Prayer is a Part, a neceſſary and eſſential Part of publick Worſhip. Chriſt recommended it, in Effect to the whole Church; his Apoſtles practiſed it. It was uſed in the *Corinthian* Church, as is evident from this Chapter; and in all the Churches of the Saints that next ſucceeded.

II. I am to explain the *Amen* required in publick Prayer, or to ſhew what it is to join therein. All preſent are to ſay *Amen*, i. e. to join in the Devotion. What this *Amen* includes in it; how we are to join in publick Prayer, I am now to inquire.

Let me premiſe that *Amen* is an *Hebrew* Word, and chiefly ſignifies, according to its Derivation, the Truth and Certainty of a Thing. 'Tis uſed ſome-

ſometimes as a Noun; thus Chriſt is called the *Amen*, Rev. iii. 14. *Theſe Things ſaith the* Amen, *are the Faithful and true Witneſs.* So he is ſtiled being a Prophet of the ſtricteſt Veracity and Truth. It is ſometimes uſed to denote the Accompliſhment of a Thing; as when 'tis ſaid *all the Promiſes are Yea and* Amen *in Chriſt Jeſus*, 2 Cor. i. 20. *i. e.* they are faithful and ſure, not one of them ſhall fail; ſince they proceed from, and are ratified and confirmed by the great *Amen, the true and faithful Witneſs.* 'Tis frequently uſed as a Note of Aſſeveration, by our Saviour in the *New Teſtament*, where he often introduces and confirms what he ſaith, with a *Verily, Verily, I ſay unto you.* In the Original it is *Amen, Amen.* And I add, it is more frequently uſed in the Concluſion of Prayer, and ſignifies, (as I hinted before) a Perſon's joining therein. It was uſed in the *Jewiſh* Church for this Purpoſe; as in denouncing the Curſes from Mount *Eball, all the People* were to *ſay* Amen, Deut. xxvii. 15, *&c.* So when Ezra *bleſſed the Lord, all the People anſwered* Amen, Amen, *Nehemiah* viii. 6, *&c.* From thence the Cuſtom paſt into the Chriſtian Church, as may be collected from my Text. And *Juſtin Martyr* informs us the Practice obtained in his Time; the Paſtor, ſays he, according to his Ability, ſends up his Thankſgiving and Prayers, and the People ſay *Amen*, i. e. they joined in the Devotion. Not that it is ſufficient to pronounce *Amen* when the Miniſter has finiſhed his Prayer; for that might be done whether a Perſon underſtood the Prayer or not; but it muſt include a Concurrence in the Duty; a ſincere and hearty joining in the Addreſſes offered up. Upon which Account the Apoſtle condemns their praying unintelligibly; becauſe others could not ſay

Amen,

Amen, i. e. could not join in the Exerciſe. So that the *Amen* intended in the Text is part of religious Worſhip, and takes in all thoſe Acts of the Mind that are neceſſary to an acceptable joining in publick Prayer; and what theſe are I am now to conſider and explain.

1. It includes, or rather ſuppoſes an Underſtanding of the Words and Matter of the Prayer put up. Without this it is impoſſible to join in it, as the Apoſtle's Argument imports. He cenſures the *Corinthian* Teachers for praying in an unknown Tongue, becauſe this rendered the Service unfruitful and unprofitable to others. They could not underſtand it, and therefore could not concur in it. Saying *Amen* ſuppoſes that you underſtand the Meaning of what is ſaid. And in order to this, two Things are eſpecially requiſite, *viz.*

That they who are the Mouth of the Congregation uſe a requiſite *Plainneſs* of Speech; and do not affect Strains of Oratory, a Stile that is above the Reach of common Worſhippers. So far as this is done by any they run into the ſame Miſtake with theſe *Corinthians*, and might almoſt as well pray in *Latin* or any other Language not generally underſtood.

'Tis alſo neceſſary that ſuch as attend publick Worſhip ſhould acquaint themſelves with the main Principles and Doctrines of the Chriſtian Religion; and ſuch Things as are more ordinarily the Matter of publick Prayer. If you are ignorant hereof, the Miniſter, though he ſpeaks never ſo properly, pertinently, and to judicious Chriſtians familiarly, will be to you a *Barbarian*; nor will you be able to join in the Duty; and in a right Manner ſay *Amen*.

2. Saying *Amen* includes an Aſſent to the ſeveral Parts of the Prayer to which it is annexed. This is a very conſiderable Signification of it, when uſed on ſuch an Occaſion. Thus it was underſtood in the *Jewiſh* Church, and in the primitive Chriſtian Church. This Cuſtom of the *Jews*, ſaith *Chryſoſtom*, remains with us, that the People by pronouncing their *Amen* ſignify their Aſſent to what the Miniſter ſays in his Prayers. So *Juſtin Martyr*, when the Præſes or Miniſter has finiſhed his Prayer, the People witneſs their Approbation by their *Amen*. And *Auſtin* calls the Peoples *Amen* their Subſcription, their Approbation, their Adſtipulation.

And indeed this is ſo neceſſary that without it there is, there can be no joint Prayer. When the Miniſter acknowledges any of the Attributes and Perfections of God; as thus, *We believe that thou art, and that thou art a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek thee; thou art the Lord; the Lord, gracious and merciful, long ſuffering, and abundant in Goodneſs and Truth; O Lord our God, thou art very great, cloathed with Honour and Majeſty, who covereſt thy ſelf with Light as with a Garment, makeſt the Clouds thy Chariot, and walkeſt upon the Wings of the Wind*, &c. Your *Amen* carries in it an Aſſent to all this; this ſay you is true, and you actually aſcribe to God what theſe Expreſſions import. So when the Miniſter makes Confeſſion to God, in ſome ſuch Manner as this; *We are aſhamed, O our God, and bluſh to lift up our Faces to thee; for our Iniquities are increaſed over our Heads, and our Treſpaſſes are grown up to Heaven; we are ſeverally guilty before thee, and have done very fooliſhly; have Mercy upon us, O God, according to thy loving Kindneſs; and according to the Multitude of thy tender Mercies blot out all our Iniquities*, &c. Your joining

ing in this part of Prayer implies, that you aſſent to what is ſaid, and approve of it. *Lord*, ſay you, *I am thus ſinful, thus vile, and thus fly to thy Mercy*. And ſo in Thankſgiving, Petition, Reſignation, (or devoting our ſelves to God) all which have Place in a regular Prayer; your *Amen* is to attend the Expreſſions; and it ſignifies your Aſſent to and Approbation of them. *We have received our Life, our Enjoyments, our Comforts, our All, from thee, O Lord*, ſaith he who is your Mouth in the Exerciſe: *Amen*, ſay you, *ſo I have. In thee we live and move, and are. Amen*, ſay you, *ſo I do and am. Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain.* Amen, *he is worthy*.

And let me here remark that publick Prayers ſhould be ſo ordered and framed, that the main Body of ſerious Chriſtians may ſet their *Amen* to them in this Senſe; that is, may aſſent to what is offered up to God: And conſequently they ſhould conſiſt of the great, eſſential, fundamental Truths of Religion, and not of Doctrines of doubtful Diſputation: For notwithſtanding all our Diſputes, real Chriſtians agree in more Things than they differ in; and agree in Points enough to conſtitute Matter of joint Prayer. We ſhould not bring our particular Opinions, or any nice uncertain Speculations into our publick Devotions; in which we cannot expect the Concurrence and *Amen* of many upright Worſhippers. In ſhort, he that is the Mouth of an Aſſembly in Prayer, ſhould ſay not only what he believes all may join with him in, but what the Generality of Chriſtians will join in. And your joining or ſaying *Amen* implies that you do aſſent to, and approve of the Things that are ſpoken.

3. There is included in your ſaying *Amen*, or joining in publick Prayer a Conſent to the Addreſſes

dreſſes ſolemnly offered up, and that your Deſires anſwer to the Purport and Scope thereof. That ancient Writer I have ſeveral times mentioned already, *Juſtin Martyr* obſerves, that *Amen* in the *Hebrew* Tongue ſignifies γένοιτο, *fiat*, let it be; and ſo 'tis an Act of the Will, and carries in it a Deſire, and Wiſh that the Things ſo ratified and ſealed may come to paſs. Thus in the Caſe of the Woman ſuſpected of Adultery; ſhe was to anſwer *Amen* to the Curſes pronounced, *Numb.* v. 22. as the People did to the Oath and Imprecation *Nehemiah* impoſed upon them, *Neh.* v. 12, 13. and to the Devotion of *Ezra*, when he prayed and *bleſſed the great God*, they anſwered *Amen*, *Amen*, q. d. let it be ſo, may God be bleſſed for ever.

This is evidently one important Senſe of your *Amen* in Prayer, as might be ſhewn at large by applying it to all the Parts of the Duty. If he that preſides therein and ſpeaks, makes devout Aſcriptions to God; as thus, *Thou art the King, eternal, immortal, inviſible; to thee be Glory for ever and ever: Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praiſed.* You in ſaying *Amen*, conſent to this, and intimate your Deſire that he ſhould have all the Glory and Praiſe given him: If the Miniſter ſay *Father, hallowed be thy Name, thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven:* The Language of your *Amen* and of your Hearts is, *O that it may be ſo! Father, glorify thy Name.* If the Miniſter beg Wiſdom, Prudence, Humility, Mortification of Sin; beg that we may be helped to *ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs*, to *lay up a Treaſure in Heaven*, that we may *labour not for the Meat which periſheth but for that which endureth to everlaſting Life:* Your ſealing theſe Petitions with an *Amen* imports your Conſent to them;

them; that you truly desire these Blessings according to the Nature and Value of them, and with a Preference of them to all Things else. If a Prayer be put up importing the Choice of God as your Portion, your God, and your all; as, *Lord, whom have we in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that we desire besides thee. One thing have we desired of the Lord, and that will we seek after, that we may dwell in the House of the Lord all the Days of our Life, to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple.* Your *Amen* signifies your Consent to this Choice, that it is indeed your Choice. *Lord,* say you, *thy Favour is Life, grant me thy self and deny me what thou wilt; deny me all Things else.* So when the Minister makes the Dedication; as thus, *Thou hast made us, and not we our selves; we are thy People and the Sheep of thy Pasture; we are not our own, for we are bought with a Price; and therefore we here resign our selves to thee; present our Bodies a living Sacrifice; holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable Service: We would esteem thy Precepts concerning all Things to be right, and henceforth hate and forsake every false way.* Your joining in, or saying *Amen* to such a Prayer is your *fiat*; *Lord,* say you, *let it be thus; come take Possession of my Soul. I would be thine; only, entirely, and for ever thine.*

This is the silent Language and Meaning of *Amen* in Prayer. This is included in your joining in that Exercise. There must be a Consent of Heart correspondent to the several Requests, Acknowledgments, Ascriptions, *&c.* that are made in that Duty. In a Word,

4. Your saying *Amen,* or joining in Prayer, implies that you make the Prayer your own; that you offer up to God the same Addresses, the same Confessions, Petitions, and Thanksgivings, that

are offered up by the Miniſter; and that with the ſame Affections and Acts of the Mind and Will that the Miniſter exerciſes or ought to exerciſe while he prays.

And this is a Matter of no ſmall Moment. You are not to hear Prayers as you hear Sermons. In the one, the Miniſter ſpeaks to you; in the other, both he and you ſpeak to God. It is not enough that he ſpeaks for you, as it were, in your Name; but you are actually to ſpeak for your ſelves, (I don't mean aloud, but) ſilently by your *Amen*. You muſt go along with the Miniſter, not only hearing him confeſs, petition and praiſe, and approving of what he ſays; but ſaying the ſame Things your ſelf; directing your Mind all the while to God, with whom alone you have to do in the Buſineſs of Prayer. Thus for Inſtance if the Miniſter ſay, *Lord, if thou ſhould'ſt mark Iniquity, who could ſtand? But there is Forgiveneſs with thee that thou mayeſt be feared. We have gone aſtray like loſt Sheep. O ſeek thy Servants.* You are not only to hearken while he prays thus, but are to pray your ſelves ſo, ſaying the very ſame Things inwardly and heartily; fixing your Thoughts on God, and turning the Eye of your Minds to him.

O conſider this and practiſe accordingly. Unleſs you underſtand this *Amen* and ſay it thus, 'tis certain you do not know what it is to join in Prayer: You may hear others pray and repeat their Words; but you do not indeed pray your ſelves: There is no true and proper joining on your Part in all the Prayers that from time to time are put up in your hearing: You are preſent in the Congregations as Spectators, but not as Parties concerned: And no Wonder, if, while it is thus, you experience nothing of thoſe Pleaſures of

religious

religious Worſhip you ſo often hear of, and that true Believers taſte. God will be found of thoſe that ſeek him; but then they muſt ſeek him with their Hearts and in Sincerity, and not affront him with a ſham Devotion.

And thus you ſee what the *Amen* you are to uſe in joint Prayer ſignifies and imports. And in the next Place,

III. I am to prove, that it is the Duty of all who attend publick Worſhip to join in Prayer, and ſet their *Amen* to it. Saying *Amen* is your Part in the publick Devotions of the Congregation; and if that be wanting, you do not really pray at all, as I ſaid before: You are to attend to, and underſtand what is ſaid; to aſſent to, conſent to it, and go along with every Petition, every Acknowledgment, and Thankſgiving, and make it your own. This is your Duty, what you are obliged to; as might appear from ſundry Conſiderations. I ſhall juſt name a few.

The Apoſtle's Argument in the Text ſuppoſes, and wholly turns upon this, that every one is bound to join in publick Prayer. He cenſures the Teachers of the Church of *Corinth* for praying in an unknown Tongue, becauſe the Unlearned (they who did not underſtand that Tongue) could not ſay *Amen*; which implies, that their *Amen* was neceſſary, and that every true Worſhipper would ſay it. No Prayers muſt be uſed in the Church that would exclude the Congregation from ſaying *Amen*; the Conſequence of which is that they are bound to ſay it, *i. e.* to join in the Prayers put up.

Our great Lord and Maſter in that Model of Prayer he has left us, has taught us the ſame Thing by concluding it with an *Amen*. Thus *Mat.* vi. 13. After the ſeveral Petitions and this

Doxology, *for thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory*, he adds *Amen*, thereby inſtructing all that attend publick Prayer to join therein, and ſeal the ſame with an *Amen*. So that you have the Direction and Authority of Chriſt in this Matter.

To which I would ſubjoin that this is repreſented as what ſhould be the Practice of the Church of Chriſt, eſpecially in its pure, evangelical and refined State: Thus after the Aſcription, Rev. i. 5, 6. *To him that loved us and waſhed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and hath made us Kings and Prieſts unto God and his Father; to him be Glory and Dominion for ever and for ever*; there is a concluding *Amen* added, to ſignify a chearful Concurrence of the Church in that Devotion. So when the four living Creatures are employed in Acts of Adoration and Praiſe, the twenty four Elders are brought in as *falling down before him that ſat on the Throne, and worſhipping him that liveth for ever and ever*, Rev. iv. 8, 9, 10. And you find them all uniting their *Amen* upon the like Occaſion, *Chap.* v. 14. The Paſſage may be ſuppoſed to refer to that time when the Church of Chriſt ſhall be advanced to its fuller Glory; then there ſhall be a univerſal *Amen*; a more perfect Harmony in divine Worſhip. Prayer and Praiſe will then be the Language of Hearts, and not the Work of dull Forms, or the mere Labour of the Lips. In the mean while, ſomething of this kind is the Duty of all now, and the Attainment of the evangelical Worſhippers. They join in the publick Devotions they attend upon and are preſent at; their very Hearts and Souls are taken up and employ'd therein.

And let me add, that ſuch an *Amen* as I have deſcribed is an eſſential Part of publick Worſhip.

You

You have no Advantage by Prayer, and indeed do not pray at all without it. The Apoſtle's Aſſertion is ſo plain to this Purpoſe, that it may ſave me the Labour of any further Proof, *If I pray in an unknown Tongue my Spirit prayeth, but my Underſtanding is unfruitful*, Ver. 14. of this Chapter, *i. e.* my Prayer is without Fruit to others; the Reaſon is, becauſe they cannot underſtand it, and cannot join in it. And certainly *cannot*, and *will not* amount to the ſame thing in this Caſe. He that cannot join in a Prayer has no Fruit; he that will not has as little: The one has no more Benefit thereby, though he has more Guilt than the other. So that the Concluſion from hence muſt be firm and good, that to join in publick Prayer, and ſay *Amen* thereto is every one's Duty. And now,

IV. I ſhall enquire how this muſt be done, or ſhew how we are to ſay *Amen*, and join in publick Prayer. And I reckon I ſcarce need to obſerve, that it is not enough to pronounce the Word, either while the Miniſter prays, or at the Cloſe of his Prayer. The Unlearned in the *Corinthian* Church might have done this whether they underſtood what was ſaid or not; they might diſcern when the Miniſter had finiſhed his Diſcourſe or Prayer, and thereupon ſay *Amen*, even though they did not underſtand the Matter of his Prayer. 'Tis not repeating the Syllables and Word that is here required; but, as you have heard, ſaying *Amen* ſignifies joining in all the Parts of Prayer. And as to the Manner of it, I would ſuggeſt a few Things.

1. It ſhould be done with Underſtanding. *How ſhall he ſay* Amen *at thy giving of Thanks?* ſays the Apoſtle in the Text, *ſeeing he underſtandeth not what thou ſayeſt.* Signifying, that it is abſo-

lutely neceſſary that we comprehend the Meaning of the Prayer; and indeed without that there can be no Aſſent to it, no Deſire, and really no Prayer at all.

Wonder not that I reſume this; for 'tis in Reality a Matter of the laſt Importance, and the Foundation of all the reſt. I grant Miniſters muſt do their Part, and take Care not to render it difficult for the Congregation to join with them in publick Worſhip, either by their Style, or by too ſublime or high Thoughts; by bringing in doubtful Opinions; or by filling their Prayers with dark and myſterious Texts of Scripture, which it is not likely the Generality of Worſhippers will be able to underſtand and rightly to apply. But when there is a competent Care and Caution uſed by the Miniſter in all theſe Particulars, Ignorance and Incapacity in others will hinder their Saying *Amen*.

When the Miniſter acknowledges and adores the Perfections and Attributes of God, his Power, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Holineſs, Mercy, Juſtice, *&c.* if you know not what is meant by each of theſe; if you have no tolerable Notion of theſe divine Excellencies, you cannot join in the Prayer and ſay *Amen* to it. So when he confeſſes Sin, the Corruption of Nature and Practice; the general Apoſtacy of Mankind, and acknowledges divine Mercy and Grace in the Work of Redemption; when he bleſſes God for his amazing Love, in ſending his Son, for his Incarnation, Death, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, the coming of the Spiri, *&c* when he prays for Grace, for Pardon of Sin, for Juſtification, for Sanctification, *&c.* all ſuch among the Worſhippers that have not ſome competent Knowledge of theſe Truths and Doctrines, cannot poſſibly ſay *Amen* to the Prayer, or join in it.

Let

Let this therefore be conſidered as a Matter of abſolute Neceſſity. You are to ſay *Amen* with Underſtanding. Endeavour to acquaint your ſelves with the great Doctrines of the Goſpel, and with ſuch Heads of Religion, as are more ordinarily the Matter and Subject of Devotion. If Miniſters uſe a Language and Style that is quite above the Unlearned, 'tis their Fault: But when they ſpeak of divine Matters in their Prayers and Praiſes; in the Language of Scripture, the plainer Scriptures, or in ſuch Words and Phraſes as are commonly underſtood among Chriſtians, and you underſtand them not, the Fault is certainly yours. *I will pray*, ſays the Apoſtle, *with the Underſtanding*, in the Verſe before my Text. Thus muſt you pray, and join in Prayer; and the more clear, full, and diſtinct your Underſtanding is, the more regular and acceptable your *Amen* will be.

2. You are to join in Prayer and ſay *Amen* with a Cloſeneſs of Attention; an Attention ſteady, fixed, and kept up through the whole Duty, ſo as to ſay *Amen* to every Part of it. And here let me put you in Mind of a few Things, of very great Conſequence to you in the Diſcharge of this important Service.

You ſhould attend to the Miniſter who is your Mouth in Prayer, hear what he ſaith, underſtand it, approve it, and go along with him in all. Nor ſhould you only attend to him while he prays, but actually pray yourſelves. As it is neceſſary that you attend to his Words, ſo you muſt attend to your own Hearts, that you may truly join with him. And here lies the Difficulty and Myſtery of the Duty I am ſpeaking of. You then join in Prayer when the very ſame Petitions and Thankſgivings which the Miniſter offers up to God, you your ſelves offer at the ſame time.

When he ſays, *Father, hallowed be thy Name*, you are not only to hear the Petition and underſtand it, which is abſolutely neceſſary, but you muſt direct your Minds to God, and put up the Petition your ſelves with thoſe Affections that ſuch a Requeſt ſhould be accompanied with, and that ſuch a Subject is proper to excite in you. And this Attention, both to what is ſaid, and to your own Hearts, ſhould be ſteady and fixed; ſhould be carried through the whole Prayer, and every Part of it. *O God my Heart is fixed, I will ſing and give Praiſe*, Pſal. cviii. 1. Our Hearts ſhould be ſo fixed, as that not one Petition, nor one Aſcription of Praiſe, would ſlip us. For when once the Attention is let down and dropt, Prayer ceaſes (as to you;) and though you ſhould recover your ſelves, and get your Hearts into the Exerciſe again, yet there is notwithſtanding an indecent Interruption and Chaſm in the Work.

Nor am I recommending an impoſſible Thing. I am ſenſible it has been objected againſt extempore Prayer, that it either excludes Attention, or makes it exceeding difficult to join in it with any good Meaſure thereof. This a late Writer has urged with much Zeal and Uncharitableneſs; though, if I miſtake not, with very little Judgment. 'Tis poſſible to join in the Manner I am preſcribing; and I doubt not in extempore Prayer as well as any other, *i. e.* to attend to it and make it our own, to put up every Requeſt, Petition, *&c.* our ſelves. The Experience of Thouſands can witneſs that this is poſſible. 'Tis difficult, I grant, to keep the Attention ſo fixed as that it ſhould never be loſt; but this is owing to the Vanity of our Minds, want of Watchfulneſs and Care, in which Chriſtians are more or leſs exact according to the Meaſure of their Attainments.

But

But what I affirm is, that this ſteady conſtant Attention is poſſible: You may join in a Prayer for a quarter or half an Hour and longer, without loſing any of it. Few I am afraid do ſo, but 'tis what they may do, and 'tis what I am now recommending to you all to do: Guard your Minds, and watch againſt all vain Excurſions; if they wander, rebuke them, recover them back again, and endeavour to fix them better. To which Purpoſe it may be of Uſe, (to ſome at leaſt) ſecretly to repeat the Petitions, and other Parts of Prayer after the Miniſter; go over in your own Thoughts what he ſays, privately uttering the ſame Words he uttereth. This may be a Means to keep you from wandring, to preſerve your Attention, and continue your *Amen*. Hear what is ſpoken, and ſpeak it your ſelves in low and ſecret Whiſpers, if you have Occaſion: But this I leave to every one's Experience either to uſe or not uſe, as he finds it an Help or otherwiſe; only remember always that when your *Amen* is dropt the Prayer is dropt. And therefore be vigilant, be watchful, *hoc age*, mind what you are about, and diſmiſs all foreign Matters. Some can pray without loſing any of the Duty, any Petitions, Confeſſions, or Thankſgivings; others loſe but a few in a whole Prayer; others join but in little; and many not at all: And this according to the Degree of their Attention. When your *Amen* is preſent, you pray; when that is wanting, there is no Prayer; ſo that it is neceſſary that it ſhould be ſteady and fixed.

3. You are to join in Prayer and ſay *Amen* with Affection. A bare Aſſent of the Mind is not enough, there muſt be thoſe Affections and holy Paſſions, that conſtitute in great Meaſure, and make up what we call Devotion. To this Purpoſe

poſe the Pſalmiſt ſays, *I will praiſe thee, O Lord with my whole Heart*, Pſal. i. 1x. And again, *Pſal.* cxix. 10. *With my whole Heart have I ſought thee.* When we pray we ſhould do it with the whole Heart, our *Amen* muſt carry along with it inward Affections.

And here let me hint that theſe Affections ſhould be anſwerable to the matter of Prayer. We muſt not be affected in the ſame manner in all the parts thereof; but differently according to the different Subject inſiſted on; when Sin is confeſſed, Shame, Sorrow and Humiliation ſhould fill our Souls: When God is acknowledged and adored; Humility, Reverence, Fear, Love, Delight ſhould poſſeſs our Minds: So in Petition and Praiſe; Deſire, Love, Gratitude and the like muſt be expreſſed. This is what you are always to mind, as what contributes to the Beauty, Harmony and Comfort of the Duty. What the Miniſter ſpeaks, you muſt attend with your *Amen*, taking care that your Affections correſpond therewith.

And let me add, that your Affections ſhould be raiſed and excited as far as you can in Prayer. Here lies the Excellency and Pleaſure of Devotion; *David* prayed and praiſed with his whole Heart; O endeavour to unite every Faculty and exert every Power in this bleſſed Work! When you are praiſing God, conſider how great, how glorious the Object, and how worthy to be praiſed; when you are confeſſing Sin, think of the unſpeakable Evil of it, and when you are petitioning for ſpiritual Bleſſings, remember the Neceſſity and Importance of them, and that the Life of your Souls depends on the Succeſs of your Prayers; when you ſay, *Lord, forgive my Iniquities, and according to the Multitude of thy tender Mercies blot out my Tranſgreſſions*; if he does not hear

ſuch

ſuch Addreſſes, and grant ſuch Deſires, you are undone forever; and therefore with what Solemnity, Serioufneſs and holy Warmth, and Zeal ſhould you attend ſuch a Service as this. O ſtir up yourſelves, be *fervent in Spirit, ſerving the Lord.*

And give me leave to recommend to you what I am confident may be of uſe, that ſometimes you a little enlarge upon, and add to the Expreſſions of him that prays in publick: As when he is deſiring ſome great and important Bleſſing, you may enforce it by ſuch an Addition as this; *O grant it for Chriſt's Sake.* When he is confeſſing Sin, you may ſecretly glance at a particular Sin of yours; and ſay, *Lord pardon that Sin, help me againſt that Infirmity, ſubdue ſuch a Corruption.* This may be done without hindring your Attention; it will rather perfect it, and help forward the Devotion. When the Miniſter makes a Dedication, ſaying, *Lord, we give up our ſelves to thee,* you may add, *Lord, may I be thine, wholly and for ever thine.* Such little Parentheſes as theſe are not inconſiſtent with joining in publick Prayer, but are an excellent Means, both of helping and expreſſing devout Affections.

Further, your Affections ſhould be cheriſhed and kept alive to the laſt; they ſhould be exerciſed and preſerved vigorous through the whole Duty. I may apply in this Senſe, thoſe Words of our Saviour, *Luke* xviii. 1. *Men ought to pray always, and not to faint.* We ſhould endeavour to maintain the ſame Vigour and Life till the Prayer is ended. This I know is a Matter of ſome Difficulty, and requires a great deal of Watchfulneſs and Care, but it is what may be done, and ſhould be done. We are to continue inſtant in Prayer, *Rom.* xii. 12. προσκαρτερουντες. the Word ſignifies, to put forth the Strength, and to hold out in the

Exerciſe without Flagging: And of this Nature was that Prayer of the Church, *Acts* xii. 5. *Prayer was made without ceaſing*, ἐκτενὴς *extended, ſtretched out*, with a continued Importunity and laſting Affection. In a Word, our Affections ſhould encreaſe and riſe with the Duty; our *Amen* grow more and more warm and fervent; and thus it will do, if our Hearts are rightly engaged. Keep cloſe to the Work in Hand and do not ramble, and you will find what was but a Spark at firſt will improve into a mighty Flame. But I paſs on.

4. As this *Amen* ſhould run through the Prayer we join in the Performance of, ſo I think it may properly enough be often repeated ſecretly during the Duty: As after any remarkable Acknowledgment, Supplication, or Thankſgiving. *Amen* (ſay you) let it be ſo. O grant the Mercy for thy Name's Sake. And as the *Amen* I am diſcourſing of, comprehends a great deal in it, it may be an help to your Devotion frequently in ſilent and ſecret Whiſpers to make uſe of the very Word. At leaſt it ſhould conclude your Prayers, ſealing, ratifying and confirming all that has paſt between God and you. And here I would ſuggeſt two Things concerning it; that it ſhould be accompanied in the Concluſion of the Duty with the utmoſt Vigour of the Affections. Thus when *Ezra* prayed and bleſſed God, it is ſaid *all the People anſwered, Amen, Amen.* The doubling the Word notes their Earneſtneſs and Warmth. We ſhould endeavour when we join in Prayer to ſet our *Amen* to the Cloſe of it with our whole Heart, with all the force of Affection we poſſibly can exert.

I would further remark, that the concluding *Amen* may decently enough be pronounced aloud.

This

This I know is not cuſtomary among us, but it is certainly no unbecoming Practice! The *Jews* and Primitive *Chriſtians* both concluded their publick Prayers with an open and loud *Amen*. *Juſtin Martyr* ſaith, they concluded with the Acclamation of *Amen*. Though this I grant is not a matter of ſo much Importance, as that any great Streſs ſhould be laid upon it; however the thing deſigned by it ſhould never be omitted; and that is a cordial Conſent to, and earneſt Deſire of the things prayed for. And the Word itſelf may be pronounced, and I think ſhould be, either aloud, or at leaſt ſecretly.

A practical Reflection or two ſhall cloſe what I have now to offer upon this Subject; and

1. Ought all to join in publick Prayer, and ſay, *Amen*, what ſhall we then think of the Church of *Rome*, which has by Appointment and a Law, obliged the People to pray in *Latin*, a Language which the Generality of Worſhippers know nothing of? Certainly it is an act of Preſumption, that is ſcandalous to the laſt Degree, and was never practiſed by any Body of Men in the World before, that called themſelves *Chriſtians*. Two Objections lye againſt them which they can never get over, *viz.* that hereby they render the *Amen* the Apoſtle here requires utterly impoſſible to moſt Worſhippers; they do not underſtand what is ſaid, and how then ſhall they ſay *Amen* to it? And then, nothing can be a more direct Contradiction to the Determination of the Apoſtle in this Chapter. Methinks there is a great deal of Significancy in it, that the prophetic Spirit in the Revelation has given that Apoſtate Church the Character of the great Whore; for muſt ſhe not have a Whore's Forehead, and a ſtrange Impudence thus to trample upon the Laws of Chriſt,

and

and make void the Commandments of God? We have a like Inſtance in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The Council of *Conſtance* owns Chriſt inſtituted it in both kinds, but notwithſtanding ordains, that the Church ſhall receive it only in one; that is, though Chriſt expreſly ſaid, *drink ye all of it*, take the Cup as well as Bread; that Church ſays, ye ſhall not touch the Cup.

But I am not to run out upon this Argument; was there nothing elſe injoined in the Church of *Rome* exceptionable and amiſs, but her *Latin* Service, it would not only be lawful, but, I think, a Duty, to deſert her Communion. The Apoſtle, you ſee, makes it neceſſary to Prayer that we ſay *Amen*; and the Reaſon of the thing proves the ſame. Now were you Members of the Church of *Rome*, moſt of you could never join in one Prayer, nor add your *Amen* to the publick Worſhip you are preſent at; but in ſhort, the Church muſt not only believe for you, but pray for you. O be thankful that you are delivered out of the Hands of ſuch Impoſtors, and ſaved from ſuch Deluſions. Only take care that you better improve the great Ordinance of publick Prayer than they do. They cannot ſay *Amen*: And if you do not ſay *Amen*, it will be much the ſame thing, only your Guilt will be greater.

2. If Prayer be a part of publick Worſhip, in which all the Members of a Congregation are to join by an hearty affectionate *Amen*; how blameworthy are thoſe that make little Account of this part of their Duty, which I am afraid is the Fault of too many. Their Religion lies in hearing; if they are preſent at Sermon, and attend to that, they can ſatisfy themſelves to be abſent while they ſhould be worſhipping God in Prayer. But how great a Contempt is this of the divine

Wiſdom

Wiſdom and Authority in the Inſtitution of that Exerciſe? Prayer is what God has injoined, it is a ſolemn Acknowledgment of him, an Act of Homage to your Creator, and of Obedience to your Redeemer, and you ſhould have as much regard to one Duty as the other; to Prayer as Hearing, and neglect neither.

3. It is evident from hence, that joining in publick Prayer or ſaying *Amen*, is a matter of great Difficulty and Importance. It requires ſpecial Qualifications, conſiderable Care and Diligence; as Light in the Mind, Grace in the Heart, Sincerity of Attention, holy and divine Affections. The Ignorant, the Careleſs, the Unſanctified and Hypocrites cannot join in any Prayer formed according to the Rules of the Goſpel. Such a Perſon cannot truly deſire what is prayed for, nor can he ſay *Amen* to the Petitions offered up: Every time he is preſent in the publick Aſſembly, and pretends to join in the ſolemn Devotions of the Church, he mocks God, and is ſelf-condemned. And as ſuch Qualifications are neceſſary to the Performance of the Duty before us, ſo it requires great Diligence to diſcharge it aright. The Heart and Soul muſt be engaged in the Work, or you will make nothing of it. Therefore

4. Be perſuaded to attend this Duty, and perform it with more Faithfulneſs for the future. You are often employ'd in this Service, and all the Benefit, Advantage and Comfort thereof depends upon the right manner of your joining therein. And it is not acting like rational Creatures to uſe Means, without endeavouring to ſecure the End for which you uſe them. You pretend to come here to worſhip God and pray to him, and after all, forget your Errand, go away and pray not at all. O ſtir up yourſelves to your

Duty.

Duty. There is nothing I apprehend we are more generally defective in, than in performing this part of religious Worſhip. That careleſs Air which ſits upon the Face of a Congregation, when engaged in it, ſhews how little they know of this Matter, and how few ſeriouſly join in publick and ſolemn Prayer. Some gaze about them, others fall aſleep, which is an open Declaration to all of the Suſpenſion of their Devotion, and that they bear no Part in the Worſhip. Others fix their Eye it may be on the Miniſter, and are affected with what he ſays, but then they only hear him pray, and are moved with the Prayer, juſt as they hear Sermons, and are moved thereby; but they do not pray themſelves. Others again join a little while, and then let down their Attention, ſuffer their Hearts to withdraw and wander; whereupon there is ſo far and ſo long a Pauſe, a Gap in their Worſhip.

O remember with whom you have to do, and what you are about. Remember when you come to the place of publick Worſhip, you are in God's Sanctuary. You come on purpoſe to meet him, to converſe with him, and particularly, to offer up your Prayers and Praiſes to him in the Name of Chriſt; and accordingly mind what you are about.

Prepare yourſelves for the Duty: Reject all foreign Thoughts, and do not give way to them, when they would intrude. You are to ſay *Amen*; every Petition ſhould run through the Heart, and by you be preſented to the Throne of God.

And thus I have laid before you a Duty, which I reckon you are all exceedingly concerned in. I muſt profeſs to you, ſhould the Enemies of our way of Worſhip be preſent to obſerve us, there

there is nothing I ſhould be ſo much aſhamed of as our exceeding careleſs, irreverent, indevout Manner of joining in publick Prayer. The moſt cannot be thought to pray at all. It is evident to others that they do not; and few are ſo much upon their Watch as becomes them. Put your Bodies into a Poſture of Worſhip, and keep your Minds fixed and intent all the while. Let not your *Amen* be wanting, and ſee that it be tended with due Affections. The *Jews* have a Diſtinction of *Amen* which is inſtructive enough; one ſort of which they call the *Orphan Amen*, an *Amen* without Faith, Deſire and other ſuitable Affections; and it ſeems it was a Proverb among them, that he who ſhould ſay Amen *totis viribus* with all his Might, the Gates of *Paradiſe* ſhall be opened to him. O learn thus to ſay *Amen*, and then God will anſwer all your Prayers with his *Amen*. He will hear, anſwer and ſupply you, grant you the Petitions you ask, and ſatisfy you with his Salvation.

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1 COR. xii. 13.

For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews *or* Gentiles, *whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

IN this Chapter the Apoſtle is treating of the ſpiritual Gifts, that diſtinguiſhed and adorned the firſt Age of the Church; attended and indeed conſtituted an extraordinary Diſpenſation. And the better to introduce his Subject, he puts the *Corinthians* in mind of the Diſadvantages they were under in their former State of *Heatheniſm*; when they were groſly abus'd by lying Spirits, who preſided in their Oracles, and led by them to the worſhip of dumb Idols. This was once their Caſe; but now ſince their Converſion (as ſeems implied) they were under the Conduct of a more excellent Spirit, *viz.* the Spirit of God who dwells in and animates the *Chriſtian* Church, and whoſe Gifts and Graces he was about to diſplay.

In the third Verſe he mentions one ſpecial Effect of the holy Spirit's teaching; by which, it is like, he deſigned to offer them a Diſtinction between Impoſtors (ſuch as pretended Inſpiration, or acted under the Influence of wicked Spirits) and thoſe that were influenced by the Spirit of God. The former were filled with Enmity againſt Chriſt and Chriſtianity, which they vented in horrid

horrid Blaſphemy, pronouncing *Jeſus accurſed*; but this he tells them none ſpeaking by the Spirit of God could do. And on the other Hand, *none can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt*; the owning that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, and calling him Lord, with an hearty Subjection to him, (which is included in calling him ſo) was a Point of ſo great Difficulty, eſpecially at that Time, that whoever did this muſt have the Holy Ghoſt for his Inſtructor; it may be affirmed of him, *Fleſh and Blood hath not revealed it to him.*

In ſome following Verſes, he touches upon ſeveral of thoſe χαρίσματα, and divine Gifts that then inriched the Church of God; and then in the 11th Verſe tells them, all proceeded from the ſame Spirit, were Streams from the ſame Fountain; all theſe, ſaith he, *worketh that one and the ſelf-ſame Spirit, dividing to every Man ſeverally as he will.* And having repreſented the Church as governed by one Spirit, he goes on to aſſert its Union, that it was *one Body.*

All that are converſant in *Paul*'s Epiſtles will find, that as there are ſome Things in them *hard to be underſtood*, ſo there is often a Difficulty in making out the Connection; occaſioned mainly, I ſuppoſe, by this; that Apoſtle in his Diſcourſe carried ſomething in his Mind, which he did not expreſs, it being perfectly well underſtood by thoſe to whom he wrote; but we not having this ſupplemental Parentheſis (as I may call it) cannot always ſo clearly ſee the Thread of his Arguments.

This Remark may be apply'd in the preſent Caſe. We may not diſcern the Reaſon of it, why the Apoſtle enumerates ſo diſtinctly the many ſpiritual Gifts that the Church of *Corinth* was in Poſſeſſion of, and then goes on to repreſent

the *Chriſtian* Church and State of Union, having *one Spirit*, and being *one Body*; but no queſtion, there was ſomething in their Circumſtances that made this neceſſary, and the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe very plain and intelligible to them, at leaſt. It is probable he intended thereby to inſtruct them in the Exerciſe of their Gifts, and to reprove them for ſome notable and known Miſcarriage in that Reſpect, as their envying and deſpiſing one another, ſome of them being puffed up with their higher Gifts, and contemning thoſe that wanted them. To correct which Temper he ſignifies to them that all their Gifts were from the ſame Spirit, and that as the Diſtribution was from the Spirit of God, ſo the Difference was according to his good Pleaſure; and that notwithſtanding this Variety they were all one Body, and conſequently ſhould preſerve a mutual Care and Affection for one another, every one attending his proper Office, moving in his proper Sphere, and exerciſing his proper Gift for the good of the whole.

This ſeems to be the Apoſtle's View in his Diſcourſe, and in the Text he confirms his great Point; *As the Body*, ſays he, *ver.* 12. *is one, and hath many Members, and all the Members of that one Body being many are one Body, ſo alſo is Chriſt*, or, ſo is the Church of Chriſt, *i. e.* notwithſtanding the Multitude of Members therein, and the Diverſities of Gifts, they are yet one; and then he adds in the Text as a Reaſon or Proof of it, *for by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body, whether we be* Jews *or* Gentiles, *whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

Underſtand the one Body of the viſible Church, and then the Meaning is, that as all *Chriſtians* receive in Baptiſm the ſame common Badge of their

Chriſtian

Chriſtian Profeſſion, and in the other Sacrament partake of the Cup of Bleſſing as a publick Token of their Relation to Chriſt, and Union one with another, they are hereby declared one, and ſacramentally made one. But as the Text ſpeaks of being baptized by the Spirit into this Body, and drinking into one Spirit, I would rather chuſe to underſtand by the Body the Church inviſible (as we diſtinguiſh) the Community of real *Chriſtians*. All theſe are by the Spirit of God, ſignified in Baptiſm, and not only ſignified but conveyed in the Lord's-ſupper, (to both which Sacraments the Text alludes) entered and formed into one Body. This I take to be the Senſe of the Place, and 'tis the Propoſition I ſhall enlarge upon, *viz. that all true and ſincere Chriſtians are by the Spirit of God united into one Body.*

In ſpeaking to this, I ſhall

I. Lay down a few Obſervations concerning the one Body here ſpoken of, to explain what is meant thereby.

II. I ſhall ſhew you how all *Chriſtians* are one, united in one Body, wherein their Union does conſiſt.

III. That the Spirit is the Principle of this Union, that it is by the Spirit they are united in and made one Body, and how. And then

IV. Make ſome Application.

I. I ſhall lay down ſome Obſervations concerning the one Body my Text ſpeaks of, in order to illuſtrate and explain the Subject. And what I would ſay on this Head I ſhall deliver in the following Propoſitions. As

1. That it is the Church of Chriſt that is ſignified by the one Body. It is repreſented in Scripture under ſeveral Metaphors, all which import the ſame Thing, though they ſerve to give

us different Views of the Subject; it is ſometimes called an Houſe or Building, a Family, the Houſhold of God, a Kingdom, as in that well-known Text, *my Kingdom is not of this World*; and in the Book of *Canticles*, (as *Chriſtian* Interpreters generally underſtand it) it is called Chriſt's Spouſe, his Dove, his Undefiled, a Garden, a Fountain ſealed, and the like; and it is very frequently repreſented under the Image and Figure of a Body, as in the Text, and *ver.* 27. of the ſame Chapter. *But now you are the Body of Chriſt, and Members in particular.* So *Epheſ.* iv. 12. *He gave ſome Apoſtles, ſome Prophets, ſome Paſtors,* &c. *for the edifying the Body of Chriſt.* And *Coloſ.* i. 18. Chriſt is called *the Head of the Body, the Church.* It is the Church of Chriſt that is intended by theſe different Images and Metaphors; and particularly, it is that which is here, and often elſewhere ſpoken of as a Body. And it may be called ſo, becauſe it conſiſts of various Members; a Body implies a Multitude and Variety of them, *it is not one Member,* ſaith the Apoſtle in this Chapter, *ver.* 14. *but many.* And, *ver.* 19. *If they were all one Member, where were the Body?* Further, the Church is called a Body, becauſe of the cloſe Union of its ſeveral Members, their Dependence and Order, as in the natural Body from whence the Metaphor is borrowed; it is a Society, not *turba*, a mere Multitude; but a Company in Connexion, united under Chriſt the Head, and by the divine Spirit, and united to one another; it is *a Body fitly joined together, and compacted,* Epheſ iv. 16. How it is united, I ſhall ſuggeſt afterwards.

2. This Body includes all the faithful, the whole Company of true Believers. Indeed in the largeſt Senſe, it takes in both militant and triumphant

phant Church, *the Family both in Heaven and Earth*, as it is called, *Epheſ.* iii. 15. And thus all the Believers that ever lived in the Church, or ſhall have a Place there from the Beginning of the World to the End of Time, belong to the one Body, to ſay nothing of the Angels, theſe are Chriſt's Church or Body, and they are that glorious Company that he ſtiles Sheep, and ſets at his Right-hand in the Judgment of the Great Day, *Matth.* xxv. 33, 34. But more ſtrictly and more agreeably (as I think) to the Scripture Acceptation of the Word, the Body of Chriſt denotes the intire Number of preſent Believers in this World; not the Company of the Elect, but of the Called, ſuch as are now acting their Part in a State of Warfare and Trial. The *Cœtus fidelium*, the Company of the Faithful, all that are by one Spirit baptized into one Body, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, Bond or Free; theſe are the one Body, the Church of Chriſt, which the Apoſtle here makes mention of.

3. This Body may be termed the inviſible Church. The Scripture indeed doth not uſe that Word, but it gives Ground enough for the Diſtinction. The Church of Chriſt in this World conſiſts of profeſſed *Chriſtians*, of all ſuch as own Chriſt, receive the Goſpel, profeſs Subjection to him, and accordingly enter themſelves under him by Baptiſm: Thus the Church was gathered when the firſt Foundation was laid, *Acts* ii. 41, 42, and 47.

As all theſe make an open and publick Profeſſion, they are called the viſible Church, they are known to the World, bear Chriſt's Name, attend his Inſtitutions, and call him, *Lord, Lord*, and conſequently are numbred among his Diſciples and Followers. But then it muſt be conſidered that this is a mixed Body; conſiſts of Perſons of different Sorts; they are all called *Chriſtians*, ſome are

Chriſtians in Reality, others only in Appearance. That this would be the State of the *Chriſtian* Church, is ſignified in ſeveral Parables, as that of the Wheat and Tares; the Net caſt into the Sea, which incloſed good and bad; that of the wiſe and fooliſh Virgins, and others.

Now the inviſible Church conſiſts of all thoſe among the Profeſſors of Religion that are true to their Profeſſion; Chriſtians inwardly, that have Circumciſion of the Heart, are *Iſraelites* indeed in whom there is no Guile. And they are called the inviſible Church, becauſe they cannot be certainly diſcerned by Men; their Faith, Hope, Love, Repentance, and all the Principles of their Obedience (that diſtinguiſh them from Hypocrites) are inviſible, lye out of Sight; *the World*, ſays the Apoſtle, *knoweth us not*, 1 John iii. 2. Not but that they make a viſible Profeſſion, ordinarily at leaſt, and when they have an Opportunity. The *wiſe Virgins*, as well as the *fooliſh* carried their *Lamps*; but then who theſe wiſe Virgins are, among that vaſt Body of Men and Women that are called Chriſtians, God only knows. Thouſands and Millions are by outward Baptiſm admitted into the Church, (the viſible Church) who are not by the Spirit baptized into the Body of Chriſt. The *Lord knows who are his*, thoſe inviſible ones are all written in his Book, and manifeſt to his Eye; but as for others, they cannot certainly know them, and certainly pronounce concerning them. I ſhall only add,

4. That this happy Society and Body are diſtinguiſhed by internal Characters. They not only confeſs with the Mouth, but believe with the Heart. What their peculiar Characters are, I ſhall not now ſtand to enquire; one cannot, I think, expreſs them more properly and fully by

any ſingle Word than that of *Sincerity*; this is that which diſtinguiſhes them from the mere Members of the viſible Church, from Hypocrites and falſe Profeſſors. They have *ſincerity and Truth in* their inward Parts. They are upright before God; he that knows all Things, knows that they love him.

Theſe are the Body of Chriſt, *the one Body*, which the Apoſtle here ſpeaks of, *whether they be* Jews *or* Gentiles, *bond or free*. Under whatever Denomination they paſs among Men, whatever Part of the World they live in, and however diverſified by the Modes of their Profeſſion, theſe pure loyal Souls make the Church of Chriſt the one Body in the Text. And ſo I proceed

II. To enquire, how all theſe are one Body, what makes them one, and wherein they are one.

It is certain they are not one abſolutely and in all Reſpects; they are many in Number, and on other Accounts there is a great Variety among them; they are not of the ſame Sentiments, nor of the ſame Stature in Religion; *Nature* has made a great Difference among them, in the different Capacities that are given them; *Education* makes a Difference; their different Company, Converſe, Inſtructions will iſſue in different Apprehenſions and Opinions: I may add, *Grace* makes a Difference among them; even thoſe Gifts that are ſupernatural are beſtow'd with great Variety, all have not the ſame Gifts, nor have they the ſame Meaſure of Grace, but *every one hath his proper Gift of God*, to apply that of the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* vii. 7. *one after this manner, and another after that*. As in the natural Body, there are ſeveral Members of diſtinct Uſe, of different Excellency, according to the Apoſtle's Illuſtration in this Chapter, ſo it is in the Church of Chriſt; there are weaker Members,

Members, more ignoble and diſhonourable Parts, as I may ſay, Chriſtians of a low Size, of much Weakneſs and Infirmity, and yet they are true Chriſtians, and belong to the Body. And let me here remark by the way that as this Variety does not hinder the Union of the Body, (it is one Body notwithſtanding) it ſhould not hinder the Love and Communion of it, and of the ſeveral Members towards each other.

But the Queſtion remains to be ſolved, wherein is this Body one? and as anſwering this tends to give you an amiable View of a Society truly valuable and glorious, notwithſtanding all preſent Imperfections and Infirmities, you will allow me a little to enlarge upon it, and I ſhall take care to keep within moderate Limits.

1. All the Members of this Body are one, are united in the Acknowledgment and Belief of the eſſential Points of Chriſtian Doctrine. They receive the *Faith once delivered to the Saints*; the *one Faith*, as the Apoſtle calls it, *Epheſ.* iv. 5. What this preciſely is, what are its Bounds, to what Particulars it extends, is a Difficulty I will not here undertake to encounter.

But in general, this may be aſſerted, that all true Chriſtians know ſo much of God, of Chriſt and of Religion, as is ſufficient to build a Chriſtian Practice and Hope upon; and as the Knowledge they have is ſanctified to them, takes hold of Conſcience, purifies the Heart and governs the Life, the Sincerity with which they conduct themſelves, (examine, believe and act) and which is known to God, renders them accepted and beloved; notwithſtanding they don't all think alike, don't all, or indeed any of them, think aright in every thing. In ſhort, as God has made a full Revelation of his Mind and Will to the Church; that

that *Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of Chriſt* given to every Chriſtian, and which unites him to the Body, doth and will lead him into all neceſſary Truth; and this I reckon enough for us to aſſert, without pretending to define, what particular Truths are abſolutely neceſſary to be known and profeſſed by every one.

2. The Body is one, all the Members of it united in an unfeigned Subjection to the Lord Jeſus. They have *one Lord*, as in that juſt mentioned Text, *Epheſ.* iv. 5. that Spirit they are under the Conduct of teaches them to ſay that *Jeſus is the Lord*, and to own him as ſuch, ſubjecting themſelves to his Authority in all Things. *My Sheep*, ſays Chriſt, *hear my Voice, and I know them, and they follow me*, John x. 27. And as he obſerves *ver.* 5. of that Chapter, *a Stranger they will not follow*; they will not follow him ſo as to deſert Chriſt, follow him to their own Deſtruction; no, Chriſt is their Lord and Maſter, and by his Authority they are governed; his Will is their Law, and his Goſpel their Rule.

In this I reckon all Chriſtians are united, they can ſay, as the Apoſtle did, when Chriſt was about to ſet up his Throne in his Heart, *Acts* ix. 6. *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* They are prepared to receive every thing they are convinced he has taught, and to reſign to every thing they apprehend he has commanded.

There may indeed be great Difference among them in expounding Chriſt's Laws, in underſtanding their Rule, and conſequently great Variety in Practice. Thus for Inſtance, tho' they have *one Baptiſm*, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, they may not agree in the Mode of it; and though they partake of *one Bread*, they may not do it in the ſame Geſture and Manner. But ſtill they agree,

even

even in theſe things, in the main, though the Circumſtances of the Action differ, their Hearts and Frames are much the ſame. One Man ſits, another kneels, and another ſtands, while he receives the Lord's-Supper; in the mean time, every real Chriſtian affectionately remembers his Redeemer, and cordially devotes himſelf to God in that Service. In a Word, there is not one of this Body but owns Chriſt's Authority; ſits at his Feet as his Teacher, and bows before his Throne as his Lord and Ruler. One is perſuaded Chriſt has taught thus and thus, that this is his Appointment and his Inſtitution; another objects againſt the Interpretation, but all ſay, Chriſt Jeſus is Lord.

3. The Body is one, the ſeveral Members of it united in the ſame Graces. Not the ſame in Degree, but the ſame in Kind. They have the ſame Principle of *Faith*. As it carries the View, and directs the Eye to another World, is *the Subſtance of things hoped for, the Evidence of things not ſeen.* Accordingly it may be ſaid of all them, that *they look not at the things that are ſeen, which are temporal, but at the things that are not ſeen, which are eternal.* They have the ſame Love and Choice; their Hearts and Affections reſt and centre in the ſame Objects, God and Chriſt, Heaven and Immortality; *they are not of the World, nor have received the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God:* And this carries their Minds upwards, and leads them to ſet their Affections on things above, crying out with the Pſalmiſt, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I deſire beſides thee.* They have the ſame Repentance, and divine Antipathy to Sin; hence the Apoſtle tells us, *He that is born of God doth not commit Sin, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himſelf, and that wicked one toucheth him not,* 1 John v. 18.

v. 18. And Chap. iii. *ver.* 10. he makes it the great Characteriſtic or diſtinguiſhing Point between the two Bodies, the Body of Chriſt, and the Body of Satan (as I may call it) *In this the Children of God are manifeſt, and the Children of the Devil; whoſoever is born of God doth not commit Sin.* And *ver.* 8. *Whoſoever committeth Sin, is of the Devil.* Now herein all the Body are one; they have an inward real hatred of Sin, they don't commit it with Allowance, do not love and live in it; the real Purpoſe, prevailing Reſolution and Bent of their Mind is againſt it. Whatever once they were, now they *are waſhed*, they *are juſtified*, they *are ſanctified in the Name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God*, 1 Cor. vi. 11. Chriſt has *purified them to himſelf, a peculiar People*, and *by the Spirit they mortify the Deeds of the Body.*

Further, they have the ſame Charity and Love towards all the Members of this glorious Communion, with a deep Averſion to the oppoſite Body, tho' attended with a Tenderneſs and Compaſſion that is agreeable to the divine Nature they are Partakers of. That Enmity God put between the Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent has been working in thoſe two contrary Parties ever ſince: Thus 'tis ſaid of the righteous Man, that *he hateth the Workers of Iniquity*; that *in his Eyes a vile Perſon is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord.* Sinners, with whatever outward Advantage they appear, whilſt they are defiled with Satan's Image, are the Object of his Pity and Diſlike; but he reverences the divine Image, wherever he ſees it; the Saints are the Excellent of the Earth; in whom is all his Delight. Thus the Scripture ſpeaks of Believers, of good Men, the Children of God, and no Queſtion

tion every one that belongs to this Body, may find ſomething of it in himſelf.

To conclude this Particular, they have the ſame Joys and Sorrows, the ſame Fears and Deſires. The Reaſon is, they are caſt into the ſame Mould of the Goſpel, born of the ſame Father, and animated by the ſame Spirit, all baptiſed by one Spirit into one Body. So that what *Solomon* ſaith may here be applied with Advantage, *As in Water Face anſwereth to Face, ſo doth the Heart of Man to Man*, Prov. xxvii. 19. The Heart of one Chriſtian wonderfully anſwers to that of another. All have the ſame Lineaments of the divine Image, the ſame godlike Nature, the ſame Principles, Affections, Deſires and Tendencies of Soul, they chuſe and refuſe, will and nill, the ſame Things.

The Body is one, and all the Members thereof one, in Point of Privileges and Enjoyment. God has *bleſſed* them *with all ſpiritual Bleſſings in Chriſt*, Epheſ. i. 3. The Chriſtian Church is a Corporation that has a glorious Charter, full of rich and valuable Grants; *All Things are yours*, ſays the Apoſtle, *whether* Paul *or* Apollos, *or* Cephas, *or the World, or Life, or Death, or Things preſent, or Things to come; all are yours*, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. In ſhort, God is the Believer's, ſo he has been pleaſed to declare himſelf, his Covenant, his Promiſes, his Son, his Spirit, and his Angels; theſe are his Guard and Servants, all of them *miniſtring Spirits ſent forth to miniſter to them that are the Heirs of Salvation*, Heb. i. 14.

Now Believers have a joint Intereſt in all theſe Privileges; they are *fellow Citizens with the Saints, and of the Houſhold of God*; and as ſuch they have a Title to all the Riches and Treaſures of this divine City and Family. They are all Sons of God; *and if Sons, then Heirs; Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Chriſt.*

5. The

5. The Body is one, and all the Members one in reſpect of Infirmities. They have the ſame Complaints; the ſame Fears and Conflicts, and ſuffer very much the ſame Temptations: They experience the ſame Clouds and Darkneſs in their Minds, the ſame Hardneſs, Deceit and Treachery of Heart, the ſame Deadneſs of Affection, the ſame Diſtempers and Maladies of Soul, the ſame *Law in their Members warring againſt the Law of their Minds.*

Thus it is with the Body we are ſpeaking of: 'Tis the Caſe of all the Members thereof, ordinarily at leaſt, tho' of ſome more than others, and at one time more than another. Some of you are apt to complain, it may be, (I know it is a common Complaint among Chriſtians) that never any had ſo wicked and vile Hearts as yours: Whereas, was the Truth known, all the Chriſtians in the World have Hearts very much like yours. I grant there are different Attainments, different Meaſures of Grace, different Degrees of Infirmities and Frailties among good Men: But as the Work of Grace is much the ſame (of the ſame kind at leaſt) in all, ſo 'tis attended with much Weakneſs and Imperfection in the beſt; and this will occaſion Complaints; and indeed the better Chriſtians any are, the more they uſually feel and lament their Defects, Failings, and Infirmities. Again,

6. The Body is one, and all the Members one in a hearty Struggle with theſe Infirmities and Corruptions, and an earneſt Contention againſt them. And this, I ſuppoſe, agrees to all the Members without Exception, tho' with great Diverſity, according to their different Attainments. All feel the Body of Death; and every one is ready to cry out, *O wretched Man! who ſhall*

deliver me? All are appriſed and ſenſible of great Imperfections, and therefore forgetting Things that are behind, looking upon paſt Things as little, ſcarce worth naming or remembring; they preſs towards the Mark for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus. Indeed this is with more or leſs Attention, Zeal, and Vigour, according to the State of the Chriſtian, his greater or leſs Degrees of Light and Life. But all know ſomething of it; they find, feel, and bewail their Corruptions; would fain throw off the Burden of them, get them wrought off more and more. This they wait, hope, pray, and endeavour for; and herein the Body is one, and all its Members one. And then I add,

7. As the Reaſon of all the reſt, the Body is one, as having received one Spirit. They are all baptiſed by one Spirit, ſays the Text, into one Body; and hence 'tis that they are one, ſo much one. They are all formed by the ſame divine Hand, all partake of the like Anointing, and drink into the ſame Spirit; and hereupon they mind, chuſe, and ſavour the ſame Things; their Hearts, Principles, and Deſires tally, and are in a ſort of Harmony or Correſpondence one with another. Nor indeed can all the Acts of Men, whatever ſacerdotal Powers they may pretend to, add one Member to this Body without the Spirit of God: Which brings me to the next general Head of Diſcourſe.

III. To ſhew that the Spirit is the Principle of this Union: That 'tis by him that we are united in and made one Body. He has the ſupreme Agency and Influence in this Matter; ſo ſays the Apoſtle in the Text, *by one Spirit we are baptiſed into one Body, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.* He expreſſes it in Terms taken from the

The Sacraments of the Chriſtian Church; the Sacrament of Initiation and of Confirmation. In Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper the Spirit is not only ſignified and repreſented, but the Promiſe of it ſealed and ratified to the duly qualified Subject. And when the Apoſtle ſaith, we are by one Spirit baptiſed into one Body, and have been made to drink into one Spirit; he ſeems to mean that all the Members of this one Body are by the Spirit united and joined with it, by that one Spirit which is ſignified or given in theſe Ordinances.

The Members of the viſible Church, external, nominal Members profeſs a Union with the Body, of which Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper are Signs and Tokens. The Members of the inviſible Church have the Thing ſignified by the outward Symbols; they partake of the one Spirit, and are really added thereby to the one Body.

And here for the illuſtration of this Matter I ſhall hint at two Things, ſhew that the Spirit is the Principle of this Union, and how he unites.

1. For the firſt, that the Spirit is the Principle of this Union; that Chriſtians are united and made one Body by him. To make this appear let me obſerve,

1ſt, That all the true Believers are repreſented as having received the Spirit of God, and as living under his Conduct and Influence. *Know ye not*, ſays the Apoſtle, *that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* 1 Cor. iii. 16. And in *Chap.* vi. of the ſame Epiſtle, Ver. 19. *Know ye not that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt which dwelleth in you?* Again Rom. viii. 14. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God.* And hence it is that their Unity is called *the Unity of the Spirit*, as ſome underſtand that Text, *Epheſ.* iv. 3. Every

Member of this Body, (the Church of Chriſt) has the Spirit of the Head communicated to him, dwelling in him, and, as I may ſay, animating of him.

2dly, It will appear that the Spirit is the Principle of this Union, if we conſider that the Scripture makes the Want of the Spirit a certain Note of Excluſion from the Body. This is imply'd in what the Apoſtle ſays, Epheſ. ii. 18, 19. *We have Acceſs by one Spirit unto the Father*, ſpeaking of Believers. Upon which it follows, *Now therefore ye are no more Strangers and Foreigners, but fellow Citizens with the Saints, and of the Houſhold of God*; ſignifying that 'till we have received the Spirit, and have Acceſs to the Father by him, we really have no Acceſs, are not fellow Citizens with the Saints, nor of the Houſhold of God, but are Strangers and Foreigners. And how expreſs that Rom. viii. 9. *If any Man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.*

As there are two oppoſite Bodies, the Church and the World, the Children of God, and the Children of this World, the one Body is diſtinguiſhed from the other by the Spirit. The one has, the other has not, the Spirit of God. *By this we know*, ſays the Apoſtle, *that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us*, 1 John iii. 24. And again Gal. iv. 6. *Becauſe ye are Sons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts*, whereas *the Word cannot receive the Spirit of Truth*, John xiv. 17. And therefore they are repreſented as *ſenſual, not having the Spirit*, Jude *ver.* 19.

So that 'tis evident from Scripture, the Members of the one Body have one and the ſame Spirit; all the Members partake thereof, and ſuch as don't receive the Spirit of the Body, do not belong to the Body.

3dly,

3dly, 'Tis by the Influences and Operations of the Spirit that the ſeveral Members of this Body are prepared and formed for a Place in it; are added to it, and united with it. Hence they are ſaid to be *built together for an Habitation of God through the Spirit*, Epheſ. ii. 22. The Church is the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt, and every Stone of this glorious Building is fitted and hewn, as I may ſay, by the Spirit of God, Men cannot, by their utmoſt Endeavours, unite one Member to this Body; whatever high Characters they may aſſume, what great Powers ſoever they may lay claim to, they cannot lay one Stone to this ſpiritual Edifice, nor add one Soul to the Church, *ſuch*, I mean, *as ſhall be ſaved*. They may give a Chriſtian Name; admit to the outward Participation of Chriſtian Privileges; take upon them to abſolve, confirm, and a great many Things of that Nature; but all this *will be found* inſufficient, without the Concurrence of the holy Spirit. 'Tis by the Spirit that we are baptized into the one Body; Men may be inſtrumental in the Work, but the Work is God's. Paul *may plant, and* Apollos *water, but God only giveth the Increaſe.*

This is the firſt Particular, the Spirit is the Principle of this Union, It remains,

2. That I ſhew now the Spirit unites the ſeveral Members to and in one Body, how they are baptized by one Spirit into one Body, what is the Work or Agency of the divine Spirit herein. And here I may take Notice of the Work itſelf; of the Means he makes uſe of; and of the Manner of his Proceeding.

1ſt, I ſhall take ſome Notice of the Work itſelf. What 'tis that is done by the Spirit, when he unites this or that Perſon to the Body. In general, he ſanctifies, renews, and changes them;

herein conſiſts their Meetneſs and Preparation for their Station in the Church; for their reſpective Offices and Services in the Body; for the Entertainments and Enjoyments they are called to partake of there. They are transformed by the renewing of their Minds, and thereby made lively Stones, according to the Apoſtle's Metaphor, are built up a ſpiritual Houſe, *an holy Prieſthood to offer up ſpiritual Sacrifices acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

I may add, herein conſiſts the great Diſtinction between theſe Perſons, and the oppoſite Body, the mere Members of the viſible Church; both have the *Chriſtian Name*, the ſame Chriſtian Calling, and join in the ſame Chriſtian Profeſſion; but the one want the *Chriſtian Nature*, the Heart, Principles, and Frame of the true Chriſtian. The Miniſtry of Men may be ſufficient for a common Profeſſion and outward Call into the Church. They may by Baptiſm admit into the Body of Chriſt, as that ſignifies the Church viſible; but 'tis the Spirit's Office to impreſs the Heart and change the inward Frame; and when he accompliſhes this upon any, they are then baptized into the one Body.

I muſt not pretend to explain this Work of the holy Spirit in the Particulars, in the Beginning and Progreſs of it; as 'tis a Work of Conviction and Light, a Work of Power and Life. You may take a ſhort View of it thus: The Spirit of God ſhines in upon the Soul, removes Darkneſs and Prejudices, repreſents the great Things of Religion in their Reality, Importance, and Neceſſity, holds them before the Eyes of the Mind, awakens and fixes the Attention to them; and thus by the Force and Power of divine Light attracts the Heart, and ſubdues it. The People of God

are

are *willing in the Day of his Power*, Pſal. cx. 3. And this is what we mean by *Grace*, at leaſt ſo far as I can explain it, not denying in the mean time any more direct, immediate Influence upon the Will, for the overcoming the Enmity and Obſtinacy thereof; overcome it muſt be, whether by the Influence of divine Light alone, now filling the Mind, or by more immediate ſovereign Touches of the Spirit of God, I ſhall not preſume to determine. And thus, I ſay, is that Work the Spirit of God performs, when by him we are baptized into the one Body.

2dly, As to the Means he makes uſe of they are various. Sometimes the Word read or preached, ſometimes a Chaſtiſement or a Deliverance, theſe are the Monitors, one or the other of them, and often all of them ſucceſſively. Hereby the Sinner is made to reflect, to pauſe and conſider, and like *Nebuchadnezzar* in his Dream, *his Spirit is troubled, and his Sleep breaks from him*, Dan. ii. 1. And now Conſcience being rouzed, and the Mind at leiſure, the Spirit of God does his Office, reads grave and ſerious Lectures, lays open former Deluſions, points out the Way of preſent Duty and Safety; and in his own Secret, but wiſe and gracious Methods reduces the Sinner, and calls him into the Church.

3dly, The Manner of the Spirit's proceeding in this Work is alſo various. Sometimes 'tis done ſuddenly and in an Inſtant; God that commandeth the Light to ſhine out of Darkneſs, ſhines into the Heart of the Sinner all at once, and ſaith, Let there be *Light* and there is *Light*; let there be *Life*, and there is *Life*. His ſovereign *fiat* is obeyed: He only ſpeaks and it is done; commands and they ſtand faſt; *the Dead and dry Bones live*. Sometimes the Work is done more gradually, and

by way of Treaty as it were. The Soul is ſummoned to ſurrender, beats a Parley, ſeems willing to hearken to Overtures of Peace, and then like *Pharaoh* hardens itſelf and returns to Folly. Afterwards, by the ſame or different Means, the Conviction is revived, and the Treaty renewed, which may remain a conſiderable while in ſuſpenſe before the Spirit takes Poſſeſſion of the Heart and enthrones itſelf there. Sometimes the Work is done in a gentle mild way, and ſometimes with more of Terror and Bondage. We have Inſtances of all this in Scripture; as in the Call of ſeveral of the firſt Diſciples, of the Apoſtle *Paul*, *Zaccheus*, the Jailor, *Lydia*, the Prodigal in the Parable, and others; which I ſuppoſe to be ſo many Types and Examples of future Converſions, and to repreſent the different Methods, the Spirit would take, in calling Believers, and baptizing them into the one Body, the Chriſtian Church.

And thus I have ſhewn what this one Body is, wherein it is one, that the Spirit is the Principle of its Union, and how it unites. I now proceed to make ſome *Improvement* of the Subject. And,

1. Let us enquire whether we be of the one Body or not. That we are of the outward inviſible Church, is a known manifeſt Thing; our Profeſſion ſpeaks for us. But the Queſtion is, Are we among the Members of the inviſible Church? We are among the *Virgins* and carry our *Lamps*; but have we *Oil* with them? Are we of the Number of the wiſe Virgins? This we ſhould examine into, and as it is a Matter of the laſt Importance, we ſhould be the more critical and exact in the Examination. Let me propound a few Queſtions to you for your Aſſiſtance herein.

1ſt, Have you received the Spirit of the Body?

This

This you ſee is made the great Diſtinction and Evidence in the Text, and you have heard 'tis made ſo in many other Scriptures. *There is one Body and one Spirit*, ſays the Apoſtle, *even as ye are called in one Hope of your Calling*, Epheſ. iv. 4. The Body is one as partaking of one Spirit; he is the great Center of Unity. Have you participated of that Spirit? I don't ſo much ask when or how you received it; Enquiries of this Nature are not of any great Conſequence in themſelves, nor indeed at all material, but as they may help you to diſcern the Thing itſelf, whether you have the Spirit or not. If you have the Evidence of the Spirit's dwelling in you by his Fruits and Effects, 'tis enough, though you are not able to ſay when you received him, or in what manner. Have you experienced his quickening, enlivening, ſanctifying Influences? Are you *led by the Spirit?* Do you live and *walk in the Spirit?* Do you ſometimes feel his Power and taſte his Conſolations? Enquire into this Matter, and remember that all the Members of the Body are by one Spirit baptized into it, and have been made to drink into one Spirit.

2dly, Are you called out of the World? taken out of it? ſeparated from it in the Temper and Diſpoſition of your Minds? *We have received, not, the Spirit of the World,* ſays St. *Paul, but the Spirit that is of God,* 1 Cor. ii. 12. There is a worldly earthly Spirit that only favours the Things of this World, which worldly Men are under the Government and Power of. But thoſe that have received the Spirit of God, have another and better Spirit actuating and ruling them, and accordingly chuſe and reliſh higher and better Things. This Diſtinction between the one Sort of Perſons and the other is often intimated in Scripture. The

one, as obſerved before, are ſaid to be *ſenſual not having the Spirit, they are after the Fleſh and do mind the Things of the Fleſh:* whereas the other are *after the Spirit*, framed by him, governed by him, and accordingly they *mind the Things of the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 5. They do φρονεῖν chuſe them, prefer, purſue them, and delight in them. Now have you received this different Spirit from what the World has, and from what you your ſelves once had, directing your Thoughts, Deſires and Affections to ſpiritual and divine Things?

3dly, Are you diſpoſed and fitted, in ſome Meaſure, for a Place in this Body? particularly for the Work of it? The Family of God is *a ſpiritual Houſe, a royal Prieſthood, called to offer up ſpiritual Sacrifices acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt*, as it is expreſſed in that mentioned 2 *Pet.* i. 5. Now every one that is brought into this Family and made a Member of it, as he is to be imployed in ſpiritual Service, ſo he has a Heart adapted and fitted thereto. It was remarked of the Apoſtle *Paul*, immediately upon his Tranſlation into the Chriſtian Church, that *he prayed*, Acts ix. 11. And you know how much he was taken up with the Affairs of Religion afterwards. Religion was his Buſineſs and his Element. So thoſe Converts, *Acts* ii. latter End, *they continued in the Apoſtle's Doctrine, and in Fellowſhip, and in breaking of Bread, and Prayers.* No ſooner were they baptized by the Spirit into the one Body, but they joined with the Body in the great and ſolemn Work that belongs to it. Have you an Heart for Religion, for Prayer and Praiſe, and the like Duties? Do you love the Word and Ordinances of God? Do you know what ſpiritual Worſhip and ſpiritual Converſe means? Taking Pleaſure in ſtated Communion with the God and Father of your Spirits.

Or do you ſtand in the Market-place all the Day idle, having no Inclination to ſuch Services, no Fitneſs and Qualifications to bear a Part in them?

4thly, Have you the *Graces* in which the Body is united and made one? The ſame Knowledge and Faith, the the ſame Hope, Love, Deſire, the ſame Joys and Sorrows with the reſt of the Faithful? All the Members of the Body, as they partake of the ſame Spirit, ſo they have the ſame Unction, the ſame anointing; not in Degree, but in Kind. They have the ſame Sort of Hearts and Principles, the ſame Byaſs and Tendency of Soul. Do you find this Conformity in your ſelves to the Members of the Chriſtian Ghurch, as the Scripture repreſents them, and has laid down the Character of them? And I may add, do you find in your ſelves a Conformity to the great Head of the Church? Believers are appointed to be like Chriſt, συμμόρφους, *Rom.* viii. 9. They bear his Complexion, and carry a Reſemblance of him. Is it thus with you? Is the *ſame Mind* in you *as was in Chriſt Jeſus?* Have you ſomething of the ſame Humility, Meekneſs, and Contempt of the World? of the ſame Zeal for God and Religion? ſomething of the ſame Charity and forgiving Temper that was ſo eminent in him? All the Body have the Spirit of the Head, whoſe Office it is to frame and mould them into a Conformity to the Head, and Reſemblance of one another.

5thly, Have you high, honourable, and reverent Thoughts of this Body? Do you value and eſteem their Perſons? delight in them as the Excellent of the Earth? and honour thoſe that fear the Lord, according to the Character of the Citizen of *Zion?* Do you value their Privileges? rejoice and glory in them more than in all earthly Treaſures?

Treaſures? Is it your chief Solace, and even Triumph that God has (as you hope) given you the Heritage of thoſe that fear him? Can you ſay with the Pſalmiſt, and is it your moſt inward Senſe of Things, *Bleſſed is the Man whom thou chuſeſt and cauſeſt to approach to thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts?* Pſal. lxv. 4. All the Members of this Body think themſelves happy in their Relation. They often admire the Grace that has called them, diſtinguiſhed and enriched them. They are ready ſometimes to ſay of others, *Let them take all*, divide their Stocks and Treaſures; *Deus meus, & omnia*, my God is my all. *The Lines are fallen unto me in pleaſant Places, I have a goodly Heritage.* Have you this Taſte of Things? If ſo, 'tis a good Argument you are of the Body. 'Tis ſaid of *Conſtantine*, that he thought it a greater Honour to be a Member of the Church, than Emperor of the World; and ſo doth every Chriſtian that is a Chriſtian indeed.

6thly, Have you the Exerciſe, Diſcipline, and Tryals, the Supports, Entertainments, and Comforts of the Body? The whole Body of Chriſtians have a Communion in this Reſpect; they have all their Burdens, Conflicts and Fears; and they have all their ſpiritual Solaces and Joys. It was indeed thus with Chriſt himſelf the Head of the Church, and we muſt herein be like him, *ſuffer with him, that we may be glorified together*, Rom. viii. 17. Do you find, Chriſtians, that you are much in the ſame State with thoſe that have gone to Heaven before you, as the Scripture repreſents their Circumſtances? That you have the common Lot of the Faithful, the Followers of the Lamb? That you have your Hours of weeping, and Hours of rejoycing on religious Accounts? Tribulation in the World, but Peace in Chriſt?

Well,

Well, examin your ſelves by theſe Particulars; hereby you may diſcern ſomething of the Character of thoſe who are of the Body, and ſomething of your own Caſe, whether you are by the Spirit baptized into the one Body.

2. If you have Reaſon to think that this Character belongs to you; that you are of the one Body united by the Spirit of its head, rejoyce in your Relation, and take the Comfort of it. A great many Conſiderations might be ſuggeſted here proper to excite your Gratitude, and adminiſter to your Comfort.

'Tis of Grace, of ſpecial Grace and Favour that you are called the Church, and particularly incorporated with this bleſſed Society. This the Apoſtle owns in his Caſe, Gal. i. 15. *God called me by his Grace.* And how affectionately doth he afterwards review and look back upon this Inſtance of divine Grace and Favour! 1 Tim. i. 14. *The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, ſays he, *was exceeding abundant.* This all of us have Reaſon to acknowledge, and ſome of us with the higheſt Strains of Admiration and Thankfulneſs.

Again, The Body you are united to is under the ſpecial and powerful Protection of its glorious Head. This Society is his Flock, his *little Flock*, to which *it is the Father s good Pleaſure to give the Kingdom.* 'Tis *his Sheep* who *hear his Voice, and follow him*, and who *ſhall never periſh, nor ſhall any pluck them out of his Hand*, John x. 27, 28. And what Cauſe of Exultancy and Triumph is here! Let the Children of *Sion* be joyful in their King.

Further, as the Society you belong to is the moſt ſecure and ſafe, ſo 'tis the moſt honourable and rich Society of any of the World. All the Members are the Children of God, *Heirs of God,*

and joint Heirs with Chriſt. God hath bleſſed them with all the ſpiritual Bleſſings they have now at preſent, in God, in the Covenant, and promiſes a Treaſure of infinite Value, and an eternal Inheritance is reſerved for them in the World to come.

I may add, you are of that Body which ſhall receive thoſe high Marks of Honour and Diſtinction the Scripture ſpeaks of, at the great Day of the Lord. When the Lord Jeſus ſhall come from Heaven, ſhall pitch his Throne in the Air, and the Inhabitants of the World ſhall be preſented before him, drawn up in two Columns, the Body, of which you are Members, as his Sheep, ſhall be placed at his right Hand. You ſhall then ſhare in his Favours, have a Bleſſing pronounced upon you by the Sovereign and Judge of the whole World, *Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.* And whilſt others are filled with Terror, every Face gathering Blackneſs, and in their Anguiſh and Diſtreſs call to the Rocks and Mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the Face of the angry Lamb: You ſhall be owned by your great Lord, careſs'd by his attending Angels, and begin an everlaſting Triumph.

This is the Heritage of thoſe that fear God; ſuch and ſuch are their Immunities, Rights and Privileges, which ſhall at laſt grow up to a full Felicity, an eternal Heaven. O be thankful, Chriſtians, for your Lot, and rejoice in God your Saviour. Bleſs him, who has thus diſtinguiſhed you: Adore his Grace, and magnify his Name daily with new Songs, new and higher Notes of Praiſe.

3. Let the Members of this Body endeavour to comport with the Dignity and Duty of their Relations. Walk worthy, Chriſtians, of the Vocation

cation wherewith you are called. Particularly attend and mind the great Things that lie before you in the Station wherein you are. Your Calling is an *holy Calling*, an *heavenly Calling*, and, as the Apoſtle has it, *an high Calling*, Phil. iii. 14. It directs the Eye to great and high Things; conſider this, and act accordingly, and don't ſuffer your Thoughts, Hearts, and Affections to be engroſſed, or too much diverted by the little and low Things of the preſent World.

Further, as the Body is one, and you have the Honour to belong to it, do all you can to preſerve the Unity thereof. Schiſm is an unnatural Sin; 'tis like a Mutiny and Diſcord among the Members of the natural Body, and tends to the Diſorder and Ruin of the whole. Endeavour to *keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, which can be done only upon Principles of catholick Love and Communion. But I cannot pretend to enlarge on this Subject. Let me only obſerve that we ſhould love all we have Reaſon to think belong to the Body, and not confine our Charity to Parties and Diviſions therein. And indeed the Providence of God has ſuffered Parties, (all Parties) one after another, and in their Turns ſo far to ſlur and diſgrace themſelves, as affords a ſufficient Caution not to be too much attach'd to any Party, or to place Religion in the Peculiarity of it. We ſhould ſhew our Charity and our cordial Affection to the whole Body; and be always ready to ſay, *Grace be with them that love our Lord Jeſus in Sincerity.*

In a Word, ſeek the Welfare of this Body, this dear Society; don't forget *Jeruſalem*, prefer it to your chiefeſt Joy; project and contrive all the Service you can for the Intereſt of it; ſome may ſerve it with their *Pens*, others with their *Tongues*,

Tongues, others with their *Purſes*, and all with their *Prayers*: And happy are they who are always devoted to its Service, ſeeking the Welfare thereof, and taking Pleaſure even in the Duſt of *Zion*. I know moſt are big with Deſigns of another Nature; but I alſo know the Time is a coming when no Work will be found ſo profitable, ſo comfortable in the Review, and be ſo able to bear the Tryal, as that which I refer to, the Service of the Church of Chriſt, and the Honour of the great Head of it.

PHILIP.

PHILIP. ii. 9, 10.

Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every Name: That at the Name of Jeſus every Knee ſhould bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth.

THE Apoſtle enters upon the Diſcourſe in this Chapter, with an Exhortation to mutual Charity and Love, the Solemnity and Earneſtneſs of which is very remarkable. *If there be any Conſolation in Chriſt, if any Comfort of Love, any Fellowſhip of the Spirit, any Bowels and Mercies; fulfil ye my Joy, that ye be like minded, having the ſame Love, being of one Accord, of one Mind.* And having cautioned them againſt a manner of acting inconſiſtent with the divine Friendſhip and Amity he was ſo deſirous to ſee among them, the Prevalency of which, he intimates, would be his greateſt Joy; he directs them how to preſerve and improve the charitable Temper. *In Lowlineſs of Mind let each eſteem others better than themſelves.* As Humility is the greateſt Friend to Peace, ſo Pride is its Bane and Ruin: This every one that knows Mankind may obſerve, and *Solomon* has long ſince obſerved it for us, *only by Pride cometh Contention, but with the well adviſed,* the Sedate, Calm and Humble, *is Wiſdom,* Prov. xiii. 10. And here in the Verſe now cited, Strife

and

and Vain-glory are connected and joyned together, as being ſeldom ſeparated : Where there is Vain-glory and Pride, there will ordinarily be Strife with all its Train of Miſchiefs, *Confuſion and every evil Work.*

Now Humility being of ſuch Conſequence to the Purpoſe the Apoſtle had in View, he not only begs for it in a Strain of Vehemence and Affection that is ſomewhat peculiar, but backs his Exhortation with Motives, joins Argument with his Intreaty; particularly, he ſets before them the brighteſt and greateſt Example of Humility the World ever ſaw, that of the Lord Jeſus, from the 5th Verſe to the 9th ; *Let the ſame Mind be in you, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus ; who being in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God, but made himſelf of no Reputation, took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeneſs of Men, and being found in Faſhion as a Man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient to Death, even the Death of the Croſs.* Chriſt was all Humility, Condeſcenſion and Goodneſs, every thing he ſpake and did, ſavoured of it ; but never did theſe amiable Qualities appear to more Advantage than in the Inſtance the Apoſtle gives. It was wonderful Abaſement in the Son of God to become an Infant, to be born, to lye in a Manger, to waſh his Diſciples Feet, to be ſubſiſted by the Charity of his Followers; but never did he ſtoop ſo low as when he hung upon the Croſs, then eſpecially he humbled himſelf, and made himſelf of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form and Guiſe of a Servant and Slave. Thus did Chriſt, and we ſhould conſider and contemplate the Example, and endeavour to copy after the Pattern of Humility he has ſet us. Pride and Stiffneſs by no Means comport with our Diſciplehip,

pleſhip, our Relation to the humble Jeſus; he was meek and lowly, and ſhall we be proud and lofty? that is to forget whoſe Followers we are, and whom we call Maſter. O let us ſtudy the Croſs of Chriſt, and ſtudy to imitate him that was crucified thereon, and it will take down our Spirits and level all our lofty Imaginations. *Let the ſame Mind be in us, that was alſo in him.*

The Text follows as an Account of the Honour, the Father put on Chriſt for his voluntary Abaſement and Humiliation of himſelf. *Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every Name: That at the Name of Jeſus every Knee ſhould bow, of things in Heaven, and things on Earth, and things under the Earth*; where we have obſervable,

1. The matter (as I may call it) of his Exaltation; wherein it conſiſts. *God hath given him a Name which is above every Name*, &c.

2. The Ground and Reaſon thereof, becauſe *he humbled himſelf and became obedient to Death, even the Death of the Croſs. Therefore God hath highly exalted him*, &c.

In diſcourſing on this Subject, I ſhall explain the Particulars, as they lye before us in the Text. And then apply all in ſome practical Reflections.

I purpoſe in the firſt Place to conſider and explain the ſeveral Particulars mentioned in my Text. Where I ſhall enquire, what is meant by giving *him a Name which is above every Name.* And then I ſhall take notice of the ſeveral Orders of things that are here ſaid to bow at the Name of Jeſus, and ſhew what may be included therein.

I. I ſhall enquire and endeavour to ſhew what is meant by giving *him a Name which is above every Name.* And I think it certain, we are not to underſtand by this Name any particular Title, as

Lord, Chriſt, Jeſus, or the like. Several beſides the Son of God have bore theſe Names; we read of more than one who had the Name of Jeſus. *Joſhuah* in *Hebrew*, ſignifies Jeſus, and therefore the Apoſtle expreſly calls him Jeſus, *Heb.* iv. 8. Lord, was the common Title of Perſons of Diſtinction, and Chriſt or Anointed was applied both to Kings and Prieſts. So that though our Saviour hath a peculiar Right to theſe Names, and they belong to him in an eminent ſublime Senſe; yet they are not appropriate to him, nor can be the Name here intended. But when it is ſaid he has a Name which is above every Name, I apprehend the Meaning is, that he is advanced and raiſed above all others. A Name among the *Hebrews*, often ſignifies Honour, Dignity and Fame: Thus we are informed, the *Babel* Builders engaged in their Undertaking to get to themſelves a Name, *Gen* xi. 4. *They ſaid, let us build a City and Tower, whoſe Top may reach unto Heaven, and let us make us a Name*; that is, let us aggrandize and greaten ourſelves, and take Meaſures to advance our Honour and Reputation. So God told *David* that he had *made* him *a Name like the Name of the great Men that are in the Earth*, 1 Chron. xvii. 18. And when *David*'s Servants came to congratulate or compliment him upon the Acceſſion and Unction of *Solomon*, they expreſs their good Wiſhes for him in theſe Terms, *God make the Name of* Solomon *better than thy Name*, 1 Kings iv. 7. They wiſh he might have more Renown, more Power and more Glory. And in this Senſe, no queſtion, we muſt underſtand it, when the Apoſtle ſaith God hath given him a Name which is above every Name, that is, he hath highly exalted him, as it is in my Text; which that other Scripture may ſerve for a Comment upon, *Epheſ.* i. 20, 21.

20, 21. *He hath ſet him at his own Right-hand in the heavenly Places, far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this World, but alſo in that which is to come.* And ſo I think a Name above every Name, may import theſe three things, the higheſt Dignity and Honour; the higheſt Power and Authority, and the higheſt Intereſt; all which our Lord Jeſus has; he is above all Principalities and Powers, whether in Heaven or in Earth. This is not obſcurely hinted in the Text, where all ſorts of Beings are repreſented as beneath him, and as bowing the Knee unto him. He is the Lord of Men and Angels, to him they are ſubject and pay Homage; he is their Patron, Advocate and Friend; takes them under his Protection and Care, and mediates on their Behalf: And thus he has a Name above them, and above every Name. Let me alſo obſerve, that this Name the Father gave him. *God hath given him a Name*, &c. *i. e.* freely and graciouſly beſtowed it upon him, as ſome remark the Word ſignifies. There was no doubt a great Excellency in his Perſon, and a great deal of Merit in his Humiliation and Sufferings, to which it is plain the Father had a Regard in his Exaltation; but notwithſtanding we may allow there was Grace and Favour therein, it was by the Will, the good Pleaſure and Grace of the Father, that he was thus advanced. He gave him a Name above every Name.

If it be asked, when he gave him this Name? I anſwer at his Reſurrection, *he was declared to be Son of God with Power, according to the Spirit of Holineſs by the Reſurrection from the Dead*, Rom. i. 4. *When he raiſed him from the Dead, he ſet him at his own Right-hand in heavenly Places, far above all Principalities and Powers, and every Name*

that is named, &c. As it is in that forementioned, *Epheſ.* i. 20, 21. The Day of his Reſurrection was the Birth-day of his Kingdom; hence that of the Pſalmiſt referring to this Matter, *Pſ.* ii. 7. *Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee.* And when he aſcended on high, and was taken up to the Father's Right-hand, he was, as I may ſay, ſolemnly enthroned.

I ſhall only further remark here, that he was thus exalted and had a Name given him above every Name on the Account of his Abaſement and Sufferings. *He became obedient unto Death*, ſays the Apoſtle, *even the Death of the Croſs; wherefore God hath highly exalted him.* So *Heb.* ii. 9. *We ſee Jeſus for the Suffering of Death, crowned with Glory and Honour. He muſt tread the Wine-preſs of his Father's Wrath; drink of the Brook in the way, before his Head was lifted up on high*, as the Expreſſion is, *Pſal.* cx. 7. He had indeed a certain Proſpect of this Honour and Advancement; it was a matter ſolemnly ſtipulated and agreed upon, between the Father and Son: it was propoſed to him, as the Prize he was aiming at; and therefore you read that *for the Joy ſet before him, he endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame, and is thereupon ſet down at the Right-hand of the Throne of God*, Heb. xii. 2. Chriſt was willing, in Obedience to the Father's Appointment, and out of Love to loſt Sinners; thus to empty and humble himſelf, to ſubmit to Sufferings and Death; and for this the Father exalts him, and gives him a Name which is above every Name. And ſo I proceed,

II. To conſider and enquire, what we are to underſtand by every Knee bowing at his Name. And I reckon it is ſo far from being the whole of the meaning, that it is no part of it, that we ſhould bow at the mention of the Name Jeſus.

Was

Was I to debate this matter, (which is not my preſent Deſign) I might offer ſeveral Arguments againſt this Interpretation. It is of ſome Weight, that the Name we are required to bow at was not given him till after his Sufferings; *he became obedient to Death, therefore God hath given him a Name*, &c. Whereas he had the Name Jeſus given him by an Angel before he was born, and the ſame was impoſed at his Circumciſion. Further, it is not ſaid we ſhall bow at the Name Jeſus, but at the Name of Jeſus τῷ Ἰησοῦ, i. e. at the high Name and Honour conferred upon the Perſon Jeſus, or rather, becauſe of the Name of Jeſus, the Name that Jeſus has given him, ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι, in the Name, or *propter nomen*, on the Account of the Name, meaning the Honour and Dignity conferred upon him. So that the Text cannot be taken literally for bending the Knee upon hearing the Word Jeſus pronounced. But the thing deſigned is Subjection to him, owning his Authority, and doing him Obeiſance. Thus the Fathers underſtand it, many of them at leaſt, whoſe Authority is not wont to be neglected, by thoſe eſpecially that are ready to contend for the literal Senſe. It notes, ſaith *Theophylact*, the higheſt Subjection to him; and to the ſame Purpoſe, *Chryſoſtom*.

And methinks the very Words of the Text, the Subjects intereſted in this Matter, determine the Senſe. The Genuflection or bowing the Knee is extended to Spirits that properly have no Knees to bow, and yet you ſee it is equally required of them, of the Things in Heaven, and under the Earth, as of things on Earth. A good Argument that the bowing the Knee here intended, is only metaphorical and figurative, importing nothing but Subjection. And this I take to be

the meaning of the Text, God hath given him a Name, which is above every Name, that on the Account of this Name, all ſhould do Obeiſance to him, ſhould *kiſs the Son*, as it is, *Pſal.* ii. *ult.* ſhould bow to his Scepter, own themſelves his Subjects and Servants, and regard him as their Sovereign and Lord. And this is what I am now

III. To explain, and conſider with reference to the ſeveral ſorts of Beings mentioned in my Text, *viz.* things in Heaven, things on Earth, and things under the Earth. I ſhould ſpend too much of my Time and Diſcourſe in Speculation, ſhould I ſtand to criticize upon the Particulars, and examine the Queſtions that may be raiſed about the things in Heaven, things on Earth, and things under the Earth. And therefore waving all nice Criticiſms, I ſhall fall in with the common and received Interpretation, and by things in Heaven, underſtand the good Angels; by the things on Earth, Mankind; and by things under the Earth, the Devil and Infernal Spirits. I might reduce all to two Heads, Spirits (the angelical Orders) and Men here on Earth; but I ſhall keep to the Diviſion here of the Apoſtle, and treat the Particulars in the Method he has placed them; Angels, Men and Devils, all muſt bow the Knee and own the Sovereignty of the Lord Jeſus.

1. I am to conſider the Subjection of Angels to the Lord Jeſus. No doubt the Saints above, the ſeparate Spirits of the Juſt, of ſuch as once tabernacled in Bodies, and lived a State of Probation here below, may in a large Senſe be included and taken in as belonging to Things in Heaven; but I ſuppoſe the Apoſtle rather intends the Natives of that World, and ſuch as have their original and more ſtated Reſidence there. The Father has given our bleſſed Saviour an Authority

and

and Dominion over theſe; they bow the Knee, and live in Subjection to him.

How they are ſubject, in what manner they expreſs their Subjection, pay their Homage, and perform Service to him, with other Queſtions of that Nature, I muſt not ſtand to examine; for though the Diſcuſſion of them might afford Entertainment to ſome, yet they are too copious Subjects to be included in the Limits of the Diſcourſe I intend, and would perhaps be thought leſs pertinent and profitable Inquiries. I muſt however beg leave to remark ſome things upon this Head, the things in Heaven (the holy Angels) bow their Knee, are ſubject to Chriſt, ſo the Text intimates, and it is the current Language of Scripture. *He is gone into Heaven,* ſaith the Apoſtle, *Angels, Authorities and Powers, being made ſubject unto him,* 1 Pet. iii. 22. All the Angels in Heaven, the Inhabitants of the other World, are put under the Government of the Lord Jeſus, and all bow the Knee before him; ſo has the Father appointed and conſtituted things.

Give me leave to offer you a ſhort View of their Subjection in a few tranſient Remarks, without enlarging much or dwelling upon the Particulars. And

It is probable they were appointed to bow the Knee to him immediately upon Man's Apoſtacy, and as ſoon as ever he was declared Mediator, and promiſed under the Notion of the Seed of the Woman, as the Reſcuer and Deliverer of fallen Man. Then they were appointed to be ſubject to him in his high Office. I don't mean in the Decree and Purpoſe of God, which was of a much earlier Date, but then it is likely the Deſign was publiſhed and made known to them, *viz.* that this glorious Perſon, who was to be the Seed of the

Woman, ſhould undertake the Cauſe of Mankind, bruiſe the Head of Satan, (the old Serpent) deſtroy his Power and Empire, and deliver his Captives.

It is plainly intimated that here a War begun between two Parties, *Gen.* iii. 15. Enmity was put between the Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent. The Prince of Darkneſs with his Militia, wicked Spirits and wicked Men are on one Side, and the Seed of the Woman, the λόγος, or Word that was in the Fulneſs of Time to aſſume the human Nature; he comes forth as the Lord and Head of the Party; having the Angels in Subjection to him, as Officers in his Kingdom. And accordingly

They attended this extraordinary Perſon in all his Miniſtrations towards the Church in his non-incarnate State. It is probably thought, that Appearance of God or of the Glory of God, which we ſo often read of under the Old Teſtament, and which the *Jews* called the Shechinah, was by the Son of God or Word with a Retinue of Angels. This divine Perſon, not yet incarnate, often ſhewed himſelf with his attending Angels, governed in the *Jewiſh* Church, appeared among them in a Cloud of Glory, and ſometimes in a human Shape accompanied with thoſe glorious Creatures. And during this State of things, the Angels were employed under him, in his providential Kingdom, and eſpecially in the Affairs of his Church; employed as Miniſters of State executing his Commands, and ſerving him according to his Appointment.

At his Incarnation, when in the Fulneſs of Time God ſent forth his Son, and he appeared as the Seed of the Woman according to the Promiſe, the Angels wait upon him and pay their Homage;

Homage; thus they were required to do, *Heb.* i. 6. *When he bringeth in the Firſt-begotten into the World*, he ſaith, *let all the Angels of God worſhip him*; let them bow their Knee and pay their Allegiance. And I might obſerve with how much Chearfulneſs and Affection they performed their Miniſtry, and attended their great Lord on this extraordinary occaſion; ſome of them proclaim his Birth to the Shepherds, others of them preſently join the Company, and all unite in a divine Song, and Anthem of Praiſe; thus you are told, *Luke* ii. 13, 14. *Suddenly there was with the Angel a Multitude of the heavenly Hoſt, praiſing God, and ſaying, Glory to God in the Higheſt, on Earth Peace, Good-will towards Men.*

They waited upon him, and attended his Service, during his perſonal Miniſtry on Earth, in the Days of his Fleſh. Thus when he was tempted of the Devil, it is ſaid, *Angels came and miniſtred to him*, Matth. iv. 11. In his Conflict in the Garden *an Angel appeared to him, ſtrengthening him*, Luke xxii. 43. And when he was ſet upon by the Rabble that accompanied the Traitor, he intimates he had a Guard ſtrong enough, ſhould he think fit to employ them; *thinkeſt thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he ſhall preſently give me more than twelve Legions of Angels?* Matth. xxvi. 53.

They were ready to aſſiſt at his Reſurrection. An Angel rolls away the Stone of the Sepulchre, and two of them publiſh his Reſurrection to his Friends, *Luke* xxiv. 4, 5.

They performed ſuitable Miniſtries at his Aſcenſion. Some of them came down from Heaven to fetch him; ſome ſtay behind to give an Account of the Matter, and comfort his Diſciples; aſſuring them that *the ſame Jeſus which was*

taken

taken up from them into Heaven, ſhould ſo come in like manner as they ſaw him go into Heaven, Acts i. 11. Some accompany him, and all welcome him thither. The Chariots of God are twenty thouſand, even thouſands of Angels; and if ſome of them came of Old to carry a Prophet to Heaven as God's Chariot, it might well be expected many of them would be employed on this Occaſion, when they were to conduct the great Prophet of the Church, and the Lord of it to his Throne. Indeed we know but little of theſe things, have but ſmall Intelligence from the other World, about the Condition and Order of Angels; but no doubt this would be a very glorious time with them; and then was eminently fulfilled what is ſaid in the Text, that *God gave him a Name above every Name, that at the Name of Jeſus every Knee ſhould bow, of things in Heaven.*

They conſtantly ſerve him in all the Affairs of his ſpiritual Kingdom; and are employed in very glorious and uſeful Offices about the World and Church, and all in Obedience to his Appointment, as ſubject to him. The Apoſtle tells us, they are *miniſtring Spirits ſent forth to miniſter for them, who ſhall be Heirs to Salvation*, Heb. i. 14. And many are the kind and good Offices which they do us. They have been employed in delivering Meſſages to the Church; thus *John* had his Revelation from Chriſt by an Angel, as he ſignifies, *Rev.* i. 1. An Angel ſends *Philip* to meet the *Ethiopian* Eunuch, and expound to him the Scripture he was reading, *Acts* viii. 26. In like manner, we find an Angel inſtrumental in promoting *Cornelius*'s Inſtruction, *Acts* x. 3, 4. An Angel appeared to the Apoſtle for his Comfort in his Danger, *Acts* xxvii. 23, 24. An Angel opened the Priſon Doors, where *Peter* and other Apoſtles were,

were, bidding them go and preach the Words of this Life, *Acts* v. 19, 20. And no Queſtion, as they rejoice at the Converſion of a Sinner, *Luke* xv. 10. they variouſly contribute thereto. All this, and a great deal more they do, as Servants of the Lord, and Head of the Church, and as Expreſſions of their Subjection to him.

They join in his Praiſe, and in the Worſhip performed to him in Heaven; thus they are repreſented as ſtanding before the Throne, admiring, adoring and exalting him with their Songs; they ſay with a loud Voice, *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive Power, and Riches, and Wiſdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Bleſſing*, Rev. v. 12. They conſtantly ſerve him, and conſtantly adore him; they have been miniſtring to him and under him for thouſands of Years, and are now ſurrounding his Throne, paying Worſhip to, and receiving freſh Commands from him.

Laſtly, They will be employed under him in the future Judgment. When he comes from Heaven the ſecond time, it will be in his own Glory, and in his Father's Glory, attended with all the holy Angels. *He will deſcend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trump of God*, 1 Theſ. iv. 16. Nor ſhall they only accompany him then, but ſerve him, and be employed in proper Offices by him at that ſolemn time; as in gathering together the Company or Perſons to be judged, forming the Aſſize, ſeparating the Sheep from the Goats; and in many other Services it is probable during the Proceſs, as well as in the Execution of the Sentence at laſt.

Theſe are ſome Particulars relating to this Matter, the Subjection of Angels to the Lord Jeſus. I proceed

II. To

II. To conſider another Claſs and Order of Beings that are here ſaid to bow the Knee to our Saviour, *i. e.* are ſubject to him, *viz* things on Earth, terreſtrial Things, the human Species, or Men in the Body. Theſe are, no doubt, the things the Apoſtle intends, Mankind here on Earth, whilſt in their probationary State, the Inhabitants of this Globe of ours. The celeſtial Creatures or the good Angels; the terreſtrial Creatures or Men; the infernal Creatures or Devils, all bow the Knee to the Son of God, and are in Subjection to him. I am at preſent, to conſider the middle Order, as they are placed in the Text, *Things on Earth*, which may be referred to two general Heads that include all Mankind, the World and the Church.

1. The World is ſubject to the Lord Jeſus. By which I underſtand all that are without the pale; whatever Religion they profeſs, or however diſtinguiſhed, the infidel and unbelieving Part of the World, whether *Jews*, *Pagans* or *Mahometans*; he is not only King upon the holy Hill of *Zion*, but Lord of all the World So the Scripture every where repreſents him, God hath *given him Power over the Fleſh*, John xvii. 2. And again in that already cited, *Epheſ.* i. 20. *He hath ſet him at his own Right-hand far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this World, but alſo in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his Feet, and given him to be Head over all things to the Church.* To the ſame Purpoſe we are told, 1 *Cor.* xv. 27. that he *hath put all things under his Feet.* And hence he is called *the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings*, Rev. xvii. 14. He has a providential Government over the whole Earth, over all Nations and Tongues; Kings and Potentates

tates as well as others, even ſuch as know him not, are yet under his Dominion and Empire. *By him Kings reign, and Princes decree Juſtice; by him Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth.* Upon Man's Apoſtacy the entire human Nature and all the Particulars thereof were put under the Authority and Headſhip of the Son of God, early promiſed as the Seed of the Woman, the great Redeemer of the loſt World.

And let me further ſuggeſt, that as the World of Mankind was brought under the Rule of the Mediator, it is not governed by the Law of Nature, as that ſignifies the Law of Perfection, but upon Terms of Mercy and Grace, ſuch as the Law of the Mediator admits and propoſes. None periſh merely becauſe they have ſinned, and are Sinners, but becauſe they do not repent and accept of the Mercy of God offered to them in the Methods of his Providence; even the *Heathens* are dealt with in a way of Mercy, Forbearance and Grace; and as God's Patience and Long-ſuffering towards them, and the many Inſtances of his Bounty, are all owing to the Mediator, to his Undertaking and Office; ſo hereby God ſhews, that he *is in Chriſt reconciling the World to himſelf, not imputing their Treſpaſſes unto them.* Tho' they have not the Goſpel, nor a Goſpel Miniſtry among them, they have Sermons and Admonitions from Providence. They are under Chriſt's Law, his healing Law, or Law of Grace, though only in the obſcurer Hints or darker Intimations of it, and by their regard hereto they will be judged at laſt. That I reckon will be the Condemnation with them, which the Apoſtle mentions, *Rom.* ii. 4. *That they have deſpiſed the Riches of his Goodneſs, Forbearance and Long-ſuffering, not knowing* and conſidering *that the Goodneſs of God leadeth to Repentance.*

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If it be asked, how doth he govern them, or how are they ſubject to him? I anſwer,

All publick Revolutions and Changes in the unbelieving World, are under the Influence of the Lord the Redeemer; he ſits at the Helm conducting theſe Affairs, and over-ruling them to his own Purpoſes. Perhaps ſome may inquire, why doth he not bring his Goſpel and ſet up his Throne among them? I anſwer, every thing in its proper Time, this ſhall be done in its Seaſon, and in the way and method appointed. In the mean while he is not an idle Spectator, but a vigilant Governor and powerful Sovereign. He *ſets up one, and pulls down another:* And doth what he will, not only in the Armies of Heaven, but among the Inhabitants and Kingdoms of the Earth.

No doubt he inſpects and governs particular Perſons, likewiſe orders their Affairs, and with his Sovereignty interpoſes in them; protects and ſupplies, puniſhes and chaſtiſes them, and when he pleaſes cuts them off. The Angels, though they have more eſpecially the Church for their Charge, to which they miniſter in a more peculiar manner, are not wholly unconcerned about the *Heathen* World, but are employed under him in ſuch Services as he requires.

He has Government in their Hearts, and over their Conſciences. I do not think it improbable, that ſuch wiſe and virtuous Men as *Socrates*, might have ſpecial Teaching from the Mediator, though they did not diſtinctly know him; and unqueſtionably he reſtrains and forms their Spirits as he pleaſes, and ſo as to anſwer his own Deſigns and Ends. We have abundant evidence of this from Scripture. The King of *Aſſyria* was a Rod in the Hand of the great Governour of the World; and *Cyrus* was his Servant, called and commiſſioned

by him to particular Work and Service. He ſtirs up and he cuts off the Spirits of Princes; *the Hearts of Kings are in the Hand of the Lord, as the Rivers of Water he turneth them whitherſoever he will.*

In a Word, the Law they are under is his Law. They are not governed by the Father's Law of perfect Nature, but by the Son the Mediator, and by his Law of Mercy and Grace. And hereupon by him, and by his Law, ſhall they be judged at laſt.

All which Conſiderations are ſufficient Tokens of their Subjection to the Lord Jeſus, and may ſerve a little to illuſtrate what is here ſaid of their bowing the Knee to him, and as a Proof that they may fitly be taken in among his Subjects. But

2. The things on Earth that bow the Knee to Chriſt, are more eſpecially the Church. The World or the part of Mankind, without the Pale is in Subjection to him, but this may be ſaid more peculiarly of the Church. *He is Head over all things to it*, i. e. for the Advantage and Benefit thereof; and he is in a very ſpecial manner, the Head and Lord of it. The Church is a Society gathered under him, that profeſſedly bows the Knee to him. And that I may give you as clear a View as I can of this Matter in a few Words, I ſhall diſtinguiſh the Church in the uſual manner, into viſible and inviſible, the outward profeſſing Members of it, and among theſe the ſincere Members thereof, which are called the inviſible Church.

1ſt, I ſhall ſpeak of the Sovereignty of Chriſt over the viſible or outward profeſſing Church. And this may be conſidered under ſeveral Periods

or

or Times, which ſhew it in ſomewhat a different State. As

1. Before his Incarnation. Which Period takes in both the Patriarchal and *Jewiſh* Church. Immediately upon the Promiſe of a Meſſiah in that known Text, *Gen.* iii. 15. Mankind began to ſacrifice, (to offer expiatory Sacrifices) which was a Service appointed by God, and had a typical reference to him. I muſt not ſtand to take notice of the Apoſtacy that ſoon happened in the Family of *Cain*, and of the incloſure of the Church, within the Family of *Seth*; nor of the greater diſtinction that was afterwards made in *Abraham*'s Family, and among his Deſcendants. I am only to obſerve, that as the Religion of Mankind was performed, as I may ſay, in the Name of the Meſſiah, the promiſed Seed; ſo he was the Head of the Church at that time and Adminiſtrator of Affairs. The Apoſtle ſays of the *Jews*, that they tempted Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* x. 9. An Argument that he was their Lord and Governor. Indeed they were baptized into *Moſes* in the Cloud and in the Sea, *ver.* 2. of that Chapter; but it was as he was the Miniſter of the *Logos*, or Son of God, againſt whom all their Rebellions were levelled. He was their Lord and their King, and as ſuch often manifeſted himſelf, both in a viſible Glory or Shechinah, and in a human Shape. Thus, in *Gen.* xviii. we read of three Men, *i. e.* Angels in the Faſhion of Men that appeared to *Abraham*, one of which is called the Lord, (Jehovah) *ver.* 13. and again, *ver.* 17. the Lord (Jehovah.) One of theſe Angels ſaid, *Shall I hide from* Abraham *that thing which I do*? This Angel could be no other than the Son of God, the Angel of the Covenant, who thus appeared in the Form of a Man, as a Prelude to his Incarnation. And (as I before obſerved)

obſerved) he with his Retinue of Angels was the Shechinah or Glory of God that governed that Church all along; that on *Mount Sinai* gave the Law, as before he had conducted the *Iſraelites* through the Wilderneſs in a Pillar of Cloud and Fire, and afterwards in the Tabernacle and Temple dwelt between the Cherubims.

How he governed the Church at that Time, how the Church under that Diſpenſation bowed the Knee to him, and owned him as Lord, lived in Subjection to him, is not now to be enquired. What has been hinted ſhews the Fact, and that is all I am at preſent concerned to do. Thus he was King before his Incarnation; the Patriarchal and *Jewiſh* Church were governed by Laws of his preſcribing, which he delivered from time to time, being himſelf (in a different manner) their Governor, interpoſing as he thought fit with all ſuitable Marks of Sovereignty and Royalty, delivering, rewarding and puniſhing as there was occaſion.

2. The Church may be conſidered during his Abode on Earth in the Days of his Fleſh, from his Incarnation to his Death; which is another Period of it. And here I might ſhew, that he continued his Relation as Lord and Governor of the Church. *Where is he that is born King of the* Jews? Say the wiſe Men, when they came to *Jeruſalem* in ſearch of him, *Matth.* ii. 2. They had an Intimation ſupernaturally, it ſeems, that at that Time the extraordinary Perſon, whom the *Jews* and all the *Eaſt* expected, was born; born King of the *Jews*, for ſo he was to be, and ſo *Nathaniel* ſalutes him, *John* i. 49. *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of* Iſrael. The Evangeliſt remarks, that he came to his own, and his own received him not. The *Jewiſh* Church

was his own, and when he appeared in the World, he offered himſelf firſt to it. He was ſent (firſt and chiefly) to the *loſt Sheep of the Houſe of* Iſrael. Theſe, as he himſelf takes notice, he would often have *gathered as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings.* In ſhort, as he had been Head and Lord of that Church, was born of that People and among them, ſo when he came into the World and took our Nature upon him, it was as their King, not excluſive of others, but theirs in the firſt Place. They had the firſt Propoſal of the Benefits of his Government, and Bleſſings of his Kingdom.

I ſhall only hint further here, that he gave ſeveral Specimens of his Sovereignty and Royalty at that time, though he was in a State of Abaſement and Humiliation. Of this Nature were his expounding and vindicating the Law he had formerly given, and ſetting it free from the Corruptions and Incumbrances the Doctors of the *Jewiſh* Church had brought it under. His cenſuring the Rulers of the *Jews*, correcting Abuſes, whipping the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple. His inſtituting new Ordinances to be obſerved in his Church, as Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper, giving a Commiſſion to his Apoſtles; and promiſing to be with them to the end of the World, *Matth.* xxviii. 19, 20. Forgiving Sins, and releaſing Men from the Puniſhment thereof, at the ſame time ſignifying that he did it as a Proof of his Royalty, and to ſhew that the Son of Man had Power upon Earth to forgive Sins. I add, his fixing the Terms of Life and Death to all the World; this he did partly in his own perſonal Miniſtry, and partly in and by the Miniſtry of his Apoſtles, who acted by Authority from

from him and in his Name, publiſhing the Laws and Rules of his Kingdom.

And thus ſtill every Knee bowed to him; he ſtill acted as Sovereign and Lord, managing the Affairs of the viſible Church. The Laws of the *Jewiſh* Church were from him by the Miniſtry of *Moſes*, and the Laws of the Chriſtian Church from him by the Miniſtry of the Apoſtles; all the Members of both bowing at his Name.

3. After his Death, and particularly and more eſpecially after his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion the Church was greatly enlarged, and became more Catholic; having according to the Purpoſe and Promiſe of God, a mighty Addition made to it from the *Gentiles*. Now God gave him *the* Heathen *for his Inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the Earth for his Poſſeſſion*, as he had promiſed, *Pſal.* ii. 8. The Foundation of this Church was laid at *Jeruſalem*, which was truly the Mother and firſt Chriſtian Church. By *Peter*'s Sermon, recorded *Acts* ii. two thouſand were added to it; and we are told in the cloſe of that Chapter, that *the Lord* daily *added to the Church* (added more and more to it) *ſuch as ſhould be ſaved.*

I am not now to give the Hiſtory of this ſacred Society, in the Riſe and Progreſs of it, or of the Victories and Conqueſts of the Son of God; how he ſubdued People under him, and brought them to bow the Knee before him. But ſhall only remark that as a Token of his Sovereignty and Dominion, he appointed a ſolemn Rite by which all his Subjects ſhould be entered under him, and as it were take an Oath of Allegiance to him; and that was Baptiſm. Thus, *Matth.* xxviii. 19. ſays he to his Diſciples, *Go ye* forth *and teach* or Diſciple *all Nations, baptizing them*

in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt. Now as Myriads, many hundred thouſands and Millions have received this Rite of his Inſtitution, they do thereby (if they underſtand what they do) ſolemnly bow the Knee at his Name, and own him as their Maſter, the Author of their Religion, their Saviour and their Lord. I might ſubjoin,

4. That there ſhall be a more univerſal Subjection to the Son of God than we have yet ſeen. According to *Jacob*'s Prophecy, *Gen.* xlix. 10. *To him* (more fully and more glorioufly) *ſhall the gathering of the People be.* He ſhall have the uttermoſt Part of the Earth for his Poſſeſſion. The Scripture abounds with Aſſurances to this Purpoſe. The Prophet *Daniel*, many hundred Years before his Incarnation, foretold that there ſhould be given him *Dominion and Glory and the Kingdom, that all People, Nations and Languages ſhould ſerve him, and all Dominions ſerve and obey him.* The 11th Chapter to the *Romans* makes it plain, that there ſhall be a more general Calling of the *Jews* with the *Gentiles.* When it ſhall be, and how brought about, I am not now to enquire. But the prophetic Character, both in *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, and the *Revelation* of St. *John*, repreſent it as a moſt illuſtrious State of things. Particularly, the Church ſhall then be exceeding large, conſiſt of all Nations, of great and ſmall therein, Perſons of the higheſt Rank among Men, the Kings of the Earth ſhall bring their Glory into it, and account it their Honour to be the Servants of the Mediator.

And as it ſhall be vaſtly extended; ſo it ſhall in a great Meaſure be refined; refined from the Corruptions that have from Age to Age, and in every Age, more or leſs ſullied it. *We according*

to

to his Promiſe, ſays the Apoſtle, *look for new Heavens and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteouſneſs*, 2 Pet. iii. 13. When *the holy City, the new* Jeruſalem, *cometh down from God out of Heaven*, ſhe will be *prepared as a Bride for her Husband*, Rev. xxi. 2. In ſhort, then the viſible Church will be not only Catholic, univerſal and extended, but will be truly the holy Catholic Church; pure and peaceful, partaking of fuller Meaſures of the Spirit of its Head, and wrought up to a nearer Reſemblance of him. Then in a greater Degree than before every Knee ſhall bow to him; and as it follows in the Verſe after my Text, *every Tongue ſhall confeſs, that Jeſus Chriſt is our Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.* There will, I ſuppoſe, be an intimate Union of Hearts among the Diſciples of Chriſt, all being in ſtrict Union and cloſe Dependence upon their common Lord and Head. And then the Mediator's Honour will be inviolate; and the Rights of his Crown. He will appear to have a Name above every Name, and accordingly receive the dutiful Homage and Worſhip of all his Servants.

But I ſhall add no more on this Head. I have briefly conſidered the Subjection of the World to Chriſt; of the viſible Church, and that in the ſeveral Periods or Diſpenſations of Religion. It remains,

2dly, That I touch upon the other Branch of the Diſtinction, the inviſible Church; by which is meant *the Generation of the Righteous*, ſincere good Chriſtians. It is not another and ſeparate Body and Order of Men, but the ſame in a different View, or part of the ſame Body. The viſible Church is the Field, having Tares and Wheat growing together; the inviſible Church is the ſame Field, conſidered with Relation only to

one of them, the Wheat without the Tares. Now theſe are among the things on Earth, that bow the Knee at the Name of Jeſûs, and indeed theſe more properly do it; all are his Subjects, but theſe by a free Conſent and after another manner than others. The Church is many ways diſtinguiſhed from the World, and theſe are the Honour and Beauty of the Church. To omit what is common to them with others, allow me to hint at a Particular or two for the Illuſtration of this matter. As

That they not only compliment him with the Tongue and Knee, but bow the Heart to him. They are not only under his Government even as wicked Men and Devils are, but they voluntarily ſubmit to it. They love their Maſter, chooſe his Service, and kiſs his Scepter. They are *made willing in the Day of his Power*. It may be ſaid of every one of them, that they would not be diſcharged from the Yoke they have taken upon them for all the World; *to whom ſhould we go?* ſays Peter, *thou haſt the Words of eternal Life*, John vi 68.

And then, they not only receive the Syſtem of his Laws, and profeſs to take them for the Rule of their Religion, but they really do ſo. They are governed by them, have them written in their Hearts; and this indeed is the great Difference between the mere profeſſed Members of the Church, and the true genuine Members thereof. The one can recite the Creed as well as the other, and many be apt (as is often the Caſe I am perſuaded) to diſpute and contend with great Fierceneſs, (which they call Zeal) for this or that Article of Faith. As ſome in the primitive Church uſed, when they repeated the Creed, to lay their Hand upon their Sword; ſo many of theſe have

their

their Sword, it may be, ready to defend the Faith, (I mean their Tongue and Pen) which, no doubt, is in its Place a good Work; but then they know nothing of the Religion of the Creed; in their Lives, Hearts, Affections and Practice they run down the whole Goſpel. They call Chriſt *Lord, Lord, but do not the things which he ſays.* Whereas the other bow the Knee and the Heart to him; they take him for their Maſter, and ſit at his Foot, copying out his Rules and Leſſons, and deſiring nothing ſo much as Proficiency in his School, Skill and Exactneſs in all the parts of his Religion. Thus they bow the Knee at his Name, not mocking of him with a ſham Profeſſion, but being inwardly ſubject to his Dominion and Government, and ſincerely obedient to his Laws.

Other Particulars might be added, but I ſhall forbear, and only ſubjoin a Remark or two for the further clearing the Subjection I have been ſpeaking of, in the Inſtance under our preſent Conſideration. As

1. That the things on Earth are ſubject to the Lord Jeſus, whilſt on Earth, and in all the Concerns of their preſent State. They have their Denomination and Diſtinction from the place of their Abode, this Earth of ours; and during that Abode they bow the Knee at his Name, are under his Influence and Government. Their Life, their Health is in his Hand; their Succeſs in the World, and all the Concernments of Religion. He ſets the Bounds of their Habitation; diſpoſes of them under ſuch and ſuch a Miniſtry, preſcribes them Laws of acting, appoints his Angels to attend them, and by his Spirit affords them Aſſiſtance and Help, according to the Method (the wiſe Method) of his Providence and Grace.

This is ſignified abundantly in Scripture; as when it is ſaid, that *all Power is given him both in Heaven and on Earth*; that *by him all things ſubſiſt*; that *he is Head over all things*, &c.

2. I would further remark, that the things on Earth, as they are ſubject to him whilſt here, ſo they leave their preſent Station, and remove from this Earth according to his Will and Appointment. Hence he is ſaid to have *the Keys of Hell and of Death*, Rev. i. 18. Of *Hades*, the unſeen World and State, preſides over, directs and orders the Paſſage thither. *He died and roſe and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living*, Rom. xiv. 9. Not only Lord over them when dead, or living, but Lord over their Life, iſſuing and determining of it juſt as he pleaſes. *There ſtood by me*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *the Angel of God, whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve*, ſaying, *fear not*, Paul, *Lo, God hath given thee all them that ſail with thee*, Acts xxvii. 23, 24. Plainly implying, that their Lives were in his Hands. And thus we are to conceive of the Lord Jeſus; we live, and we dye, according to his Will and Word. And then

3. He diſpoſes of them, and determines their everlaſting State in the other World. *He that overcometh, will I grant to ſit with me on my Throne*, ſays he, *even as I alſo overcame and am ſat down with my Father on his Throne*, Rev. iii. 21. The Father judges no Man, but hath committed all Judgment unto the Son. Hence ſaith the Apoſtle, *it is a very ſmall thing with me that I ſhould be judged of Man's Judgment, he that judgeth me is the Lord*, 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4. In a Word, he governs in this World, governs and judges in the other.

Thus

Thus every Knee bows to him, (of things on Earth) whilſt on Earth they are under his Dominion, are called out of this World, and deſpoſed of in the other, as he pleaſes and appoints.

JOB

PHILIP. ii. 9, 10.

Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every Name: That at the Name of Jeſus every Knee ſhould bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things on Earth, and Things under the Earth.

IN diſcourſing on theſe Words I have explained what is meant by giving our bleſſed Saviour a Name which is above every Name, and remarked that it imports his Exaltation and high Advancement. I have ſhewn you what we are to underſtand by every Knee bowing at his Name, which, I apprehend, ſignifies Subjection to him. After this I proceeded to treat of the ſeveral Orders of Things that are here ſaid to bow at the Name of Jeſus; and according to the Diviſion and Method of the Apoſtle in the Text,

Firſt, I conſidered the Matter with Reſpect to the Things in Heaven, whereby I underſtand the good Angels, and on that Occaſion I a little illuſtrated their Subjection to the Lord Jeſus. And then,

Secondly, I diſcourſed of the next Order and Claſs of Beings that bow the Knee at his Name, *viz.* Things on Earth, which may be underſtood of all Mankind, and more eſpecially of the Church. It only remains now,

Thirdly, That I take Notice of the other Claſs of Chriſt's Subjects, namely, Things under the Earth. The Word here uſed, and which we render thus, very rarely occurs in Scripture; I think no where elſe in the New Teſtament. As it ſtands in this Diviſion of thoſe who bow at the Name of Jeſus, and is diſtinguiſhed from Things in Heaven and Things on Earth, it muſt ſignify either the Dead, and ſuch as are in the Earth, or infernal Spirits; and I have choſe to underſtand it of the latter. And ſo it imports the Sovereignty of the Son of God in the Hades or Hell of evil and miſerable Spirits.

But here it will be asked, why are they called Things under the Earth? In anſwer to which Queſtion let me obſerve, that Hell is repreſented as beneath in Scripture, in Oppoſition to Heaven, which is ſaid to be above; tho' the Reaſon of the Name is not very obvious, nor have the Critical and more Curious been able (ſo far as I have ſeen) to give a ſatisfactory Account of it. Some have ſuppoſed that Hell is in the Center of the Earth, and thence the *Latin* Name *Infernus*, and *Inferi*; which may be thought by ſome to receive Countenance from the Hypotheſis of thoſe modern Philoſophers who maintain there is a vaſt central Fire, which breaks forth through the Volcano's of the Earth. But to paſs this by, as what I apprehend has no great Probability in it; the Thing aſſerted here (according to this Interpretation) is Chriſt's Dominion over the World of evil Angels. *God has highly exalted him, that at the Name of Jeſus every Knee ſhould bow*; and among the reſt Devils are made ſubject to him.

I would not fill my Diſcourſe with too much Speculation, and therefore ſhall only offer a few Propoſitions concerning this Matter.

I. That

I. That ever ſince the Fall of the Angels and their becoming Devils, ſince they loſt the Holineſs and Rectitude of their Nature, and were caſt out of Heaven, they have been full of Enmity to Mankind. This appeared in Satan's attacking our firſt Parents in Paradiſe. It cannot be accounted for but from the Spite and Malice of his Nature, contracted upon his Apoſtacy and Sin, that the Devil being miſerable himſelf ſhould ſo induſtriouſly ſeek to make Mankind miſerable alſo, and involve them in the ſame Condemnation. Hence his Attempt upon *Adam* in Paradiſe, which having been ſucceſsful, he is called *a Murderer from the Beginning*, John viii. 44.

II. Having vanquiſhed innocent Man and drawn him into Rebellion, he eſtabliſhed a ſort of Empire over him, which he ſtill has over the Children of Diſobedience. He is therefore called *the Prince of this World; the God of this World*; and wicked Men are ſaid to be of their *Father the Devil*. Man having revolted from God, liſted (as it were) under Satan, and was delivered into his Hands; and on this Account ſuch as are not reſcued by a ſuperior Power are ſaid to be *taken Captive by him at his Will*, 2 Tim. ii. 26. Was I to enlarge upon this Head, I might ſhew that there is a ſort of Order and Regimen eſtabliſhed among evil Spirits. They have a Superior or Chief, under whom the reſt are marſhalled; hence we read of the Devil and his Angels. They have Rules and Laws preſcribed them and obſerved by them, Schemes laid according to which they proceed, for the better Management of their Deſigns. Thus the Scripture repreſents the Matter; and it affords no ſmall Admonition to us that we ſtand on our Guard againſt them. *Be ſober, be vigilant, becauſe your Adverſary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about ſeeking*

ſeeking whom he may devour, 1 Pet. v. 8. O that we may not be ignorant of their Devices!

III. Mankind being in this unhappy Caſe, abuſed and tyranniſed over by evil Spirits, the Son of God undertook our Cauſe; makes Head againſt Satan, and becomes our Deliverer. This was the Deſign of his Office, as is intimated in that firſt Promiſe, *The Seed of the Woman ſhall bruiſe the Serpent's Head*, Gen. iii. 15. And it was alſo the Deſign of his Incarnation, in Purſuit thereof, 1 John iii. 8. *For this Purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the Works of the Devil.* He was promiſed to bruiſe his Head; and he was ſent to do ſo, to deſtroy his Works, to undermine his Kingdom, and reſcue the Captives out of his Hands. And accordingly,

IV. The Scripture repreſents this glorious Perſon as conquering Satan, as getting a Victory over him, and ſubduing him. This was done upon the Croſs by the Sacrifice he there offered; *forasmuch as the Children are Partakers of Fleſh and Blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took Part of the ſame, that through Death he might deſtroy him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil*, Heb. ii. 14. There was a ſort of War between Chriſt, the Seed of the Woman, as the Head of a ſpiritual Kingdom, and the Serpent, the Devil, as Head of the Kingdom of Darkneſs. Chriſt by dying defeats this Enemy. He was always ſuperior to him, and could, no queſtion, reſtrain him at Pleaſure, but it would ſeem he had more Power, and Leave to make ſtronger Oppoſition to him before than now he has; *through Death he deſtroyed him that had the Power of Death, the Devil.* Something was then done that was not done before; otherwiſe he could not be ſaid then to deſtroy him and deliver us. So Col. ii. 15. *Having ſpoiled Principalities and Powers*

he made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them in or upon his Croſs. Some have thought his laſt Conflict in the Garden, when he ſweat Drops of Blood, and complained in ſuch an unuſual Strain, that his Soul was exceeding ſorrowful, *&c.* was occaſioned by his Struggle with evil Spirits. The Devils had leave now to attack him, and muſter up all their Forces againſt him; and if ſo, it muſt be look'd upon as their laſt Effort; and that henceforth they for ever yield to him, and remain in a State of perfect Subjection, which is the State of Things now.

The Victory was won on the Croſs, and the Triumph began then; and it was compleated when he roſe from the Dead and went to Heaven to be inſtalled in his Kingdom. Then he led Captivity captive, and carried his Enemies at his Chariot Wheels, in Token they were vanquiſhed, intirely routed and overcome.

V. Whatever Oppoſition the Devil makes to Chriſt and his Kingdom, whatever Enmity he expreſſes towards Mankind, and towards the Church particularly, 'tis evident, that he and his Accomplices are wholly under the Controul and Sway, and at the Command of the Lord Jeſus. The Things under the Earth, as well as others, bow at his Name; ſo the Text tells us, which other Scriptures confirm. 'Tis plain, they were apprehenſive of his Authority over them in the Days of his Fleſh; hence the Devils that had poſſeſſed the *Gadarenes* beſought him that he would ſuffer them to go into the Herd of Swine, *Matth.* viii. 31. They knew he had Power over them, (which he ſhewed on all Occaſions.) And you ſee they asked Leave of him to enter into thoſe Creatures, as knowing they could not do this without his Permiſſion. Thus it was then, and much more

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is it ſo now, when his Empire over them is more fully ſettled, and their Subjection more compleat.

Let me remark here, that they are under a ſort of Confinement according to his Will. Are his Priſoners and Vaſſals, they *are reſerved in everlaſting Chains under Darkneſs unto the Judgment of the great Day*, Jude ver. 6. 'Tis true, they are Priſoners at large; their Chains are of conſiderable Extent; they have Leave to wander (ſome of them at leaſt) as far as this Earth; but ſtill they carry their Chains along with them; they cannot break them, nor deliver themſelves from their State of Miſery and Woe, nor get out of the Subjection into which they are reduced. He hath led them captive, and every one of them is placed under his Power, in his Goal, (as I may ſay.)

And then let me further obſerve, that whatever Leave they have to aſſault Mankind, to tempt and delude; 'tis by the Permiſſion of the Lord Jeſus the Head of the Church; and ſtill under his Controul. I may be allowed to ſay, they are a ſort of Servants to him; he makes Uſe of them in the Affairs of his Kingdom; for Inſtance, he uſes them to puniſh ſome, to harden, to chaſtiſe, to torment, and they are many Ways his Inſtruments, to inflict Penalties as he ſees fit. And then he uſes them to exerciſe the Graces of his Church; this is a State of Warfare. *We wreſtle not only againſt Fleſh and Blood, but againſt Principalities, againſt Powers, againſt the Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World, againſt ſpiritual Wickedneſs in high Places*, Epheſ. vi. 12. And it is to ſerve the Deſigns of the Lord Jeſus, and make way for the Victory and Triumph of his Followers, that the Devils are permitted to attack them. They can do no more (Chriſtian) than is allowed by thy great Lord and Maſter, cannot ſhoot one Dart

without

without his Leave; and when thy State of Tryal is over, and thou art tranſplanted into the Church above, they ſhall tempt and diſturb no more for ever. Let me add,

VI. Chriſt, by Reaſon of the Dominion he has over them, and as an eminent Diſplay of it, will at laſt judge and condemn them to farther and great Puniſhment. They are now at their Liberty, not that he has not conquered them, and has not Power over them; but the preſent State of Things requires it ſhould be ſo. But ſhortly they ſhall be brought forth and doomed to cloſe Impriſonment and final eternal Miſery. There is a great Day of Judgment yet to come, when the Devils themſelves ſhall receive their Doom from the Mouth of the Lord Jeſus; *Death and Hell ſhall then give up their Dead, and all ſhall be judged* by the Son of God, *Rev.* xx. 13. This they knew and expected (as appears) even in the Time of their greater Liberty; and therefore cry out, when he was about to diſpoſſeſs ſome of them, *What have we to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of God? Art thou come to torment us before the Time?* Matth. viii. 29. So the Legion, we read of Luke viii. 31. *beſought him that he would not command them to go out into the Deep*, into the great Abyſs, the bottomleſs Pit of Hell, as ſome underſtand it, the Place appointed for their Confinement and final Puniſhment. This they looked for, it ſeems, at his Hands, and we are aſſured this is what he will in time inflict.

Thus I have given a ſhort Account of the Subjection of the ſeveral Sorts and Claſſes of Things here mentioned to the Lord Jeſus, Angels, Men, and Devils. God hath highly exalted his Son; given him a Name above every Name, that at the Name of Jeſus every Knee ſhould bow, of Things

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in Heaven, and Things on Earth, and Things under the Earth. How they bow the Knee, and what is included therein has been ſuggeſted. Allow me now to ſubjoin two general Reflections, upon the whole, before I proceed to improve the Subject.

1ſt, That this Dominion which the Son of God exerciſes over the World of Angels, Men, and Devils, is all in Subſerviency to the Intereſt of the Church. *The Father hath given him Power over all Fleſh, that he might give eternal Life to as many as he has given him*, John xvii. 2. He is conſtituted *Head over all Things to the Church*, Epheſ. i 20. *in bonum Eccleſiæ.* Chriſt as Mediator aims at the Service of his Church; *He loved it, and gave himſelf for it*, that he might make it *a glorious Church*, finally glorious to Heaven, *Epheſ.* v. 25, 27. And no wonder that he has the ſame Deſign in all his Adminiſtrations and Acts of Power and Providence. He was born and died for the Good of the Church, and he governs for its Good alſo, *i. e.* in one Word, to ſave it.

2dly, When he ſhall have finiſhed his ſaving Deſign, and have accompliſhed the Number of his Elect, this Government of his (his mediatorial Government) will ceaſe. This the Apoſtle ſignifies, 1 Cor. xv. 24. *Then cometh the End, when he ſhall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, when he ſhall have put down all Rule, and all Authority and Power; for he muſt reign, till he has put all Enemies under his Feet.* Upon which it follows, ver. 28. *And when all Things ſhall be ſubdued unto him, then ſhall the Son alſo himſelf be ſubject unto him that put all Things under him, that God may be all in all.* 'Tis, I think, plain from this Text, that the Kingdom which the Son received, and the Dominion he exerciſes over the World, and over the particu-

lar Claſſes of Beings, mentioned in the Text, ſhall terminate. Chriſt was ſent to redeem us to God; and when that is done, and all the Redeemed are ſaved, preſented to the Father, reconc led, ſanctified, fit for his Preſence, and with the deſigned Glory upon them, Redemption work, and whatever concerned it, will in Courſe be over. The Captain of our Salvation will, I may ſay, return his Commiſſion, when all Enemies are conquered, and all Oppoſition, Rule, Authority, and Power is put down. When this is done, the final State commences. As the laſt Act of his regal Authority, he paſſes Sentence on all his Subjects, and then reſigns to the Father, that God may be all in all; the Redeemer and the Redeemed triumphing together for ever.

What the final State will be, and what Regard will be had to the Mediator; whether he ſhall be ſtill any way Mediator, the *Medium* of *Worſhip*, or *Medium* of *Enjoyment*, and the like, are Things that we know not; and we not only muſt, but ought to be content to be ignorant of them, God having drawn a Veil over them, and kept them a Secret from us.

And if you will receive it, I think it a very uſeful Truth, which had it been attended to, would have prevented many Controverſies that have diſturbed the Chriſtian Church, *viz.* that our chief Concern with the Son of God is as Mediator. We are neither concerned to know preciſely what he was before he was incarnate, how employed in the World above, nor what he will be, and how employed, after his Mediation is finiſhed. No doubt he will be in high Honour, be looked upon with exceeding great Pleaſure by the redeemed World, and receive their grateful Homage. They will remember his Services, and according to the

Laws of that State (yet very much unknown) pay him Honours. Even when the Kingdom is delivered up, they will remember what a Sort of a King he was, how advantageous his Government, and what Benefits they have received by his Means. And whilst they are worshipping before the Throne, and him that sits upon it, they will give many an affectionate Glance to *the Lamb that was slain*. But I would not intrude into Things unrevealed. Our present Business is with the Mediator, whom God hath exalted, and to whom every Knee must now bow and shall bow at last, till the End cometh; and he hath delivered up the Kingdom to his Father. And even then we may be sure he shall be no Sufferer. Lose no Honour, having gone through so mighty a Trust with such glorious Success, though the Method of paying it may be different from what at present it is.

But I hasten to *improve* the Subject in some practical Reflections upon what has been said. And

I. We may infer from this Text, compared with the Context, how acceptable an obediential Temper is to God; a Mind wrought and formed to a full Compliance with his Appointment and Will. Christ became obedient to Death; and therefore God hath highly exalted him; his Obedience is the Reason assigned by the Apostle for his Exaltation.

Nor was this Instance of Obedience (though an eminent one) singular, an occasional Sally and Effort of Zeal, but the Effect and Exercise of a settled habitual Disposition. He set out upon this Principle, when he undertook the Work of our Redemption; as is intimated Psal. xl. 6, 7, 8. *Sacrifice and Offerings thou didst not desire*, &c.

Then ſaid I, lo I come: I delight to do thy Will, O my God, yea, thy Law is within my Heart. And when in the Fullneſs of Time, he was ſent forth, and took the Body that was prepared for him, he conſtantly acted from the ſame Principle. Thus he tells his Diſciples, when they preſſed him to take Meat, *I have Meat to eat that ye know not of; my Meat is to do the Will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his Work*, John iv. 32, 34. This was his Buſineſs, and it was his Delight, afforded him as much Refreſhment as Men find in their neceſſary and moſt grateful Food.

And the ſame Temper not only carried him through all the Toils and Sufferings of his Life, but through Death itſelf, and reconciled him to the Croſs; *he became obedient to Death, even the Death of the Croſs.* There was ſomething in this kind of Death, (I mean Crucifixion) that made it peculiarly grievous. It was a curſed Death, full of Ignominy and Pain; and 'tis evident, in his Caſe it was attended with more than common Terror; witneſs his Agony and bloody Sweat in the Garden; witneſs his Complaint, *My Soul is exceeding ſorrowful even unto Death.* There were uncommon Ingredients of Bitterneſs in his Cup; hence he cries out, *Father, ſave me from this Hour*, and *if it be poſſible, let this Cup paſs from me.* And yet under theſe extraordinary Circumſtances of Suffering, under this mighty Preſſure and Load; he reſigns to the Will of God, reſigns his own Intereſt, and ſubmits his own Will. *Nevertheleſs not as I will, but as thou wilt.* Thus was *the Law of God within his Heart*; thus he *delighted to do his Will*, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks of this Matter; thus he *became obedient to Death*; and we are here told, for this Cauſe the Father *highly exalted him*, and

gave him a Name above every Name, that at the Name of Jeſus every Knee ſhall bow.

How far the Obedience of Chriſt was meritorious in the ſtricteſt Senſe of that Word, will admit of Diſpute, and has been diſputed. 'Tis ſaid in the Text, that therefore God gave him a Name, gave it of Grace and Favour, as the Word ſignifies. But 'tis plain there was an Excellency and Acceptableneſs in his Obedience; ſo that 'tis here repreſented as the Reaſon of his after Honour and Advancement.

Our Caſe bears ſome Reſemblance of his. Would we be accepted of God, be exalted, in our Meaſure, as Chriſt was, we muſt ſtudy the ſame Temper, copy after the Example of our great Lord and Maſter. *Let this Mind be in you*, ſays the Apoſtle, *which was alſo in Chriſt*, Ver. 5. of this Chapter. We ſhould endeavour after his Mind, his Temper and Diſpoſition in this Reſpect; a Mind entirely ſubjected to the Will and Authority of God.

And as this is a Matter of exceeding Importance, allow me to hint a Particular or two by way of Direction. As,

That we ſhould endeavour to have a Principle of Obedience laid in the Heart, as a Foundation of a Courſe of Obedience. Thus it was with our great Exemplar the Lord Jeſus. He began his Mediation from this Principle, and it run through all the difficult Services and glorious Atchievements of it. We muſt have the ſame inward Temper and Frame of Heart, the ſame divine Principle within, or we ſhall ſoon faulter and blunder in our Obedience. Perſons are ſometimes puſhed on to Acts of Obedience, to Things that look like Religion and Compliance with Duty, by external Motives and Conſiderations. They

have ſudden good Moods, tranſient Flights of Zeal, from accidental Excitations in Providence; but their *Goodneſs is like the Morning Cloud, and as the early Dew it paſſes away.* We ſhall never be obedient to God, ſo as to ſhare with our Lord in his Exaltation, unleſs the Heart be wrought for it, unleſs his Law be within our Hearts.

Further, our Obedience muſt be thorough and univerſal. 'Tis not enough, that we pray and perform ſome Acts of Worſhip; but we are to labour after a Conformity to the whole Will of God, ſignified to us any way. *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed*, ſays *David*, *when I have Reſpect unto all thy Commandments*, Pſal. cxix. 6 We are to *add to our Faith Virtue, to Virtue Knowledge, to Knowledge Temperance, Patience, Godlineſs, brotherly Kindneſs and Charity*; to ſtudy the whole Syſtem and Scheme of divine Graces, and endeavour *that theſe Things may be in us, and abound, that we may be neither barren and unfruitful in the Knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7, 8. And that we may ſtand compleat in all the Will of God. 'Tis not ſufficient, that we pretend to have Faith, but we muſt have Virtue and Courage as the Guard and Defence of it; Temperance in the Government of our Paſſions and Appetites; denying our ſelves, love our Enemies, ſhew all Meekneſs towards all Men, do nothing through Strife and vain Glory, but *in lowneſs of Mind each eſteem other better than himſelf.* The Obedience the Son of God ſet us an Example of was entire. You cannot ſhew any one Inſtance wherein he failed; and thus it ſhould be with us. And though we ſhall fall ſhort in this imperfect State, and in many Things all of us offend, we ſhould at leaſt deſign and aim well, and preſs towards the Mark. Let me add,

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Our Obedience ſhould be ready and current in time of Tryal and Inſtances of Difficulty. The Apoſtle ſeems to put a Mark upon it in the Context, that Chriſt became obedient to Death, *even the Death of the Croſs.* If any Thing could have cooled his Zeal, and diverted him from his Courſe, the Death of the Croſs would have done it; but you ſee he did not ſtick at that. O how unlike are we to the Lord Jeſus! How unlike to the Church above, to the Angels that do his Will, and hearken to his Voice! We ſuffer any little Humour and Paſſion to interpoſe and interrupt our Obedience; whilſt the Son of God, that ſhould be our Pattern herein, went through Death, and all the Terrors of the Croſs, that he might do the Will of him that ſent him, and teſtify his Obedience to his Father.

To conclude this Particular, let us pray for and purſue with conſtant Sollicitude this divine Temper; 'tis our beſt and moſt direct Preparation for Heaven. The Will of God is the Rule of every Thought, Affection and Motion there, and Obedience to it, the Temper of all the Inhabitants thereof. And the Text tells us of how great Account it is with God. Chriſt became obedient to Death, and therefore God hath highly exalted him. O Let the ſame Mind be in us that was in him. And if we reſemble him in the Frame of our Spirits, we ſhall partake with him in the Honour and Bleſſedneſs of his Kingdom.

2dly, This Text alſo recommends to us Humility and Self-Abaſement, as a Virtue or Grace of great Excellency and of great Account with God. You ſee the Fruit and Conſequence of it in the Example of the Lord Jeſus. He humbled himſelf and became obedient, *&c.* and therefore God hath highly exalted him. He was in the Form

of God, and thought it no Robbery to be equal with God: but as the State of Things required it, and the Obedience he intended included this in it, that he ſhould in Compliance with the divine Will, and the Means of our Redemption, become thus low, he empties himſelf, and takes upon him the Form of a Servant, and hereupon God gave him a Name above every Name. In which, I reckon, the Way to Honour (Honour with God, both here and hereafter) is marked out, and our Duty in that Reſpect ſet before us; 'tis the Way of Humility, Condeſcention, and Lowneſs of Mind. Thus the Text repreſents it, and the Scripture every where confirms it. *Tho' the Lord be high, yet hath he Reſpect unto the Lowly, but the Proud he knoweth afar off,* Pſ. cxxxviii. 6. To the ſame Purpoſe is that of the Prophet, Iſai. xlvii. 15. *For thus ſaith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth Eternity, whoſe Name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy Place; with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the Humble, and to revive the Heart of the contrite ones. Before Honour,* ſays *Solomon, is Humility,* Prov. xv. 33. And again, *A Man's Pride ſhall bring him low, but Honour ſhall uphold the Humble in Spirit,* Prov. xxix. 23. The ſame Doctrine is inculcated and often inſiſted upon in the New Teſtament, particularly by our bleſſed Saviour; he himſelf ſet the moſt glorious Example of it, *Learn of me,* ſays he, *for I am meek and lowly in Heart,* Matth. xi. 29. And elſewhere; *Whoſoever ſhall exalt himſelf ſhall be abaſed; and he that ſhall humble himſelf ſhall be exalted.* And again, Matth. xviii. 3. *Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven;* adding in the following Verſe, *Whoſoever ſhall*

ſhall humble himſelf as this little Child, the ſame is greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven.

You ſee how different God's Thoughts are from ours, and his Ways from ours. We are apt to aſſume high Airs, and to think if we ſubmit to others, make any Abatements, appear in a humble Garb, and put on the Lowlineſs of Mind the Scripture requires, preferring others before our ſelves, condeſcending to Chriſtian Services, according to our Rule, that we leſſen our ſelves and ſuffer in our Honour. But this is to take wrong Meaſures of Things, and weigh them in a falſe Ballance. Chriſt has taught us otherwiſe, and tells us that he who humbleth himſelf as a little Child, the ſame is greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven, *i. e.* he is the beſt Chriſtian, he has the moſt of Chriſt and Grace in his Temper, and is of the higheſt Account with God. The Text exemplifies all I am ſaying; Chriſt humbled himſelf, took upon him the Form of a Servant, and therefore God has highly exalted him, and given him a Name above every Name.

O learn of him; let this Mind, this humble Mind, that was in Chriſt be alſo in you, and let it appear in all your Behaviour and Conduct. Two Things in general it ſhould influence to. A quiet Submiſſion to the Hand of God, whatever his Diſpenſations towards us are. Chriſt put himſelf into ſuch a State and Condition, that he could ſay by the Mouth of the Prophet, *I am a Worm and no Man*, Pſa. xxii. 6. He thus humbled himſelf, made himſelf of no Reputation, and being thus low, he was prepared to receive any Thing at the Hand of God, and to ſubmit even to the Croſs in Obedience to the divine Pleaſure. It is our Pride that makes us cenſure the divine Providence. Did we conſider how little we are, and how little

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we deſerve, our Complaints would be turned into Praiſes. Did we lay our ſelves low as we ought, we ſhould bear it more chearfully when God ſees fit to lay us low.

And then further, the ſame Humility and Self-Abaſement ſhould appear in our Intercourſe with Men, and influence that. An imperious domineering Spirit, Stiffneſs and Inflexibility, is altogether unbecoming the Chriſtian. When this appears in us, we are off our Guard, walk naked, and Men ſee our Shame; as the Expreſſion is; we have loſt our Cloathing of Humility, the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit. And alas! how often is this the Caſe? and how much are we hereby diſgraced? The Rules of our Religion laid aſide, and trampled under Foot? the Peace broken, and all the Duties and Offices of Society, (of religious Society eſpecially) ſuſpended?

O remember, Chriſt humbled himſelf; he took upon him the Form of a Servant; he waſhed his Diſciples Feet; he pleaſed not himſelf, (as the Apoſtle expreſſes it) but was humble even to the Croſs in Obedience to his Father, to promote his Honour and ſerve the Intereſts of Men; and therefore God hath highly exalted him. And ſhall we ſeek Honour another way? or is it poſſible to obtain true Honour another way? Muſt our Pride continually dictate? our Wills be obeyed, and all the Laws of Humility be cancelled and blotted out of the Bible? And will God honour us and advance us in this Method, and whilſt under the Prevalency of ſuch a Spirit? Certainly he will not, if the Goſpel be true, and we are to be conformed to the Example of our Lord and Head. He humbled himſelf, and thereupon God highly exalted him, and gave him a Name above every Name. And in the ſame way we are to ſeek for Glory,

Glory, Honour, and Immortality, and ſhall have eternal Life.

3dly, Has Chriſt a Name above every Name? Is he thus exalted? Are Angels, Men and Devils ſubject to him? How glorious a Perſon is he? And what Honour is due from us to him? *Conſider*, ſays the Apoſtle, *how great this Man was*, (ſpeaking of *Melchiſedeck*) *to whom even the Patriarch* Abraham *gave the Tenths of all*, Heb. vii. 4. He makes it an Argument of *Melchiſedeck*'s Grandeur, that ſo renowned a Patriarch paid him Tribute, and acknowledged his Superiority. But how much greater muſt the Son of God be, whom all the Angels are required to worſhip, to whom every Knee muſt bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things on Earth, and Things under the Earth; and who has all Things put under his Feet? and how much to be honoured by us? We honour a mere Creature like our ſelves, when at the Head of Empire, or when but preferred to the higheſt Poſt in a Court. Thus when *Joſeph* was made Vice-Roy of *Egypt*, all were enjoined to *bow the Knee before him*, Gen. xli. 43. And ſhall we not honour Chriſt, who is *King of Kings, Prince of the Kings of the Earth*, Rev. i. 5. Nay Lord of Angels; for, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, he is *made better than the Angels, as he hath by Inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than they*, Heb. i. 4. He has a more excellent Name, greater Dignity and Power conferred upon him; *Angels, Principalities, and Powers, are ſubject to him*; all bow the Knee at his Name.

Let me farther remark, that it was one End of his Advancement; that he might receive Honour from Men; thus we are told, John v. 22, 23. *The Father hath committed all Judgment*, i. e. all governing Power, *to the Son, that all Men ſhould honour*

honour the Son even as they honour the Father. So that the Thing expected from us is, that we pay Honour to the Son of God. This is due by the Father's Appointment; 'tis conſequent upon his high Advancement, a Duty reſulting from thence. As he has all Judgment, all Power and Authority committed to him, is Lord over Angels, Men and Devils, we ought to honour him. And if it be asked, how we muſt honour him? or how expreſs our Honour? I anſwer in a few Particulars.

And I think I may be allowed to ſay, 'tis not to be done, at leaſt not chiefly, much leſs only by bowing at the Mention of his Name; a Practice ſo common among us, that every one underſtands what I mean. I would not be miſtaken here; 'tis not my Deſign to cenſure other Peoples Devotion; I don't queſtion but bowing the Knee literally, and in this Senſe, is conſiſtent with that bowing I have hinted is intended in the Text; no doubt many bow the Knee and bow the Heart at the ſame time, making the one only a Token of the other, uſing it as an outward Expreſſion of inward Reverence.

Nor is it my Buſineſs to find Fault with the Cuſtom, though I could alledge enough to juſtify the Neglect of it. I think it certain that it has no Foundation in this Text, and conſequently it can be no better than a Piece of voluntary and ſelf-deviſed Worſhip. And it might deſerve Conſideration, whether ſuch an open expounding the Text in this Senſe does not tend to make People overlook the higher and true Senſe. When they have been taught and conſtantly uſed to cringe, when they hear the Name Jeſus, ſuch as are leſs thinking may be apt to look no farther, as if that was the whole Duty recommended to them. I

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do not ſay, that it is ſo univerſally, or that the Practice is inſeparable from this Abuſe, for I believe the contrary; but it ſeems to have this Tendency, and I am afraid is too often thus abuſed. But though we forbear this Compliment at the Mention of his Name, we ſhould be concerned to do him Honour, and Honour anſwerable as far as we can to his State of Advancement. Particularly,

We ſhould honour him by ſubjecting our ſelves to him. This is the Thing directly intended by bowing at (or becauſe of) his Name. We ſhould own his Dominion and Sovereignty, and reſign to his Government.

We ſhould honour him by high and reverend Thoughts of his Perſon and Office; making all ſuitable Aſcriptions to him. The Church in Heaven and Earth are brought in as uniting in a common Song and Doxology to him; ſaying, *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive Power, and Riches, and Wiſdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory and Bleſſing*, Rev. v. 12. And again, ver. 13. *Bleſſing and Honour, and Glory and Power be unto him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.* His Grandeur and Exaltation demands this Homage and honorary Tribute from us; and as the Payment of it is a direct Way of honouring him, ſo it may be it is eſpecially intended by bowing the Knee to him. We ſhould be ready to join in his Praiſes; conſider him in his high Poſt, and treat him as the great Emanuel; often revolve in our Minds what he was, and what he became for our Sake; what he did and accompliſhed on our Behalf, and with what Glory he went through his whole Work. And then,

We ſhould pay him Honour by depending upon him in his Office, and for executing and finiſhing all the Services and Purpoſes of it; relying on his Merit and Interceſſion, and intruſting our Souls in his Hand. A great deal of that *Faith* the Goſpel requires, conſiſts in this, and a great deal of the Honour due to the Son of God is this way expreſſed.

We are eſpecially to honour him in our Lives and Behaviour; thereby making a juſt Repreſentation of him to the World, adorning our Profeſſion with all divine Graces and Virtues. Are theſe thy Followers, O Jeſus? (ſaid one) when he had met with a flagrant Inſtance of Injuſtice from ſome that were called Chriſtians. We ſhould exemplify his excellent Laws and Precepts, *hold forth the Word of Life*, and let it appear that we are under the Inſtitution and Conduct of the wiſeſt and beſt Maſter.

We are to expreſs our Honour of him by preferring his Authority to all other Authority. We ſhould be determined by it at all Times and in every Caſe; αὐτὸς ἔφη (the Maſter hath ſaid it) was determining in the School of *Pythagoras*, and thus it ſhould be in the School of Chriſt, and among all Chriſtians. A Text of the New Teſtament, a Rule preſcribed by our great Maſter, ſhould decide all Queſtions, and govern every Practice. Further, we ſhould neglect all oppoſite Authority, and even deſpiſe it as null and void; 'tis ſo in Reality. All is under him, (as you have heard) and ſubject to him in the Exerciſe; and though he may ſuffer his Servants to fall under the Oppreſſion of uſurped Power for wiſe and good Ends; 'tis only by his Permiſſion. What was ſaid by him, when the high Prieſt was ſwaggering over him, John xix. 11. *Thou couldſt have*

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no Power againſt me, except it were given thee from Above. The ſame may be ſaid by any of his Followers to their fierceſt and moſt formidable Enemies, they could have no Power againſt them, except it were given them from Above; and ſhortly this Power will be broken and put down, 1 *Cor.* xv. 24, 25. So that his Authority ſhould be not only the greateſt, but comparatively the only Authority with us. He has a Name above every Name, *&c.* Let us think ſo, and treat him with an anſwerable Regard. We ſhould fear no Man in the Cauſe of Chriſt, and when we have his Authority for what we do, nor regard any Authority that ſtands in Competition with his.

We ſhould honour him by glorying in his Name and Service, and in our Relation to him. Paul *a Servant of Jeſus Chriſt*, you know that Apoſtle ſets in the Front of many of his Epiſtles, as a Title he ſeems proud of. And I have ſometimes obſerved with Pleaſure in reading *John*'s Goſpel, that he ſeveral Times deſcribes himſelf by the Character of *the Diſciple whom Jeſus loved*, accounting it his greateſt Honour to be a Favourite of Chriſt, as to be ſure it was. This ſhould be a Chriſtian's Temper. And then it is ſo, when we eſteem it our Happineſs, Dignity, and higheſt Privileges to be Members of his Church, to belong to his Family, bear his Name, and be gathered under his Headſhip and Protection, we ſo far do Honour to our Maſter. I might add,

We ſhould expreſs our Honour of him by our Diligence, Chearfulneſs and Zeal in his Service. What Fatigues and Hazards do Perſons go thro' to obtain the Favour of a great Man, eſpecially of a Prince; if they have the Honour of his Commands, and the Proſpect of his Countenance, it will carry them through any Difficulties, it ſhould be

be ſo with the Servants of Chriſt; nor do we conſider how great he is, and how great he will ſhortly appear, if we think much of any Services, whereby we may teſtify our Regard, and render our ſelves acceptable to him.

4thly, I cannot but remark, that this Text has an aweful Aſpect upon our modern Deiſts, and ſpeaks Horror to them. The Scripture tells us, God has *exalted his Son Jeſus to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins.* And in the Text has *given him a Name above every Name, that at the Name of Jeſus every Knee ſhould bow*, &c. And elſewhere that he has *ſet him at his right Hand, Angels, Principalities and Powers being made ſubject to him* Indeed the Holy Scripture abounds with Teſtimonies to the ſame Purpoſe, concerning the Power, and Authority of Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator. *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, ſit thou at my right Hand, untill I make thine Enemies thy Foot-Stool*, &c. Pſa. cx. 1, 2. So Pſ. ii. 6. *I have ſet my King upon my holy Hill of* Zion, *thou ſhalt rule them with a Rod of Iron*, &c.

Now if there be any Truth in the Bible, and the whole be not a cunningly deviſed Fable, the Caſe of the Perſons I am ſpeaking of muſt be exceeding deplorable, and one would think deſperate; I mean of ſuch as have the Light of the Goſpel ſhining about them and among them, and yet wilfully ſhut it out; that live in Emanuel's Land, and might ſee his Glory as the only begotten of the Father, and yet inſtead of bowing the Knee to him, and owning his Authority, treat him with Rudeneſs and Contempt, as if he was an Impoſtor. O that they could conſider the Matter ſeriouſly and in time! Whatever may be ſaid in Excuſe of the Heathens and their mere negative Unbelief, or Nonbelief; nothing can be pleaded in Behalf of

theſe

theſe Perſons. I do not love to paſs ſevere Cenſures, or Sentences upon Men, eſpecially large Bodies of Men, but I muſt own I would not for all the World, was I in their Circumſtances, have the Terror of that Text ſounding in my Ears, *Acts* iv. 12. *Neither is there Salvation in any other, for there is no other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.*

As to thoſe that never heard of his Name, to whom he was never offered and preached, the matter may be different for ought I know; ſuch as have ſinned without Law, ſhall be judged without Law. How God will deal with the *Heathens*, he has not told us; and it becomes not us to ſtep up into his Throne. *Secret things belong to the Lord, but things revealed to us.* But where the Law is promulgated, and Jeſus Chriſt is made known, where his Authority and Commiſſion has been ſhewn and vindicated with a Clearneſs and triumphant Light, that nothing but Mens Paſſions and Luſts can withſtand; their unbelief muſt I think be eſteemed wilful, and the Condemnation juſt and unavoidable.

But I leave theſe Perſons to their Judge, earneſtly deſiring God may give them Repentance to the Acknowledgment of the Truth, hoping I ſpeak to none of this unhappy Number, that have had the Bible in their Hands all their Life, and made no other uſe of it but to cavil and pick up Objections againſt their Duty and Intereſt in ſo important a Concern.

5. Is the Son of God highly exalted? Has God given him a Name above every Name, that at the Name of Jeſus every Knee ſhould bow? Let all be exhorted to comply with the Duty here recommended, and bow the Knee to the Lord Jeſus, owning his Authority and great Name, ſub-

jecting themſelves to him. This is the beſt Improvement that can be made of ſuch a Reflection, and ſo much depends upon it that you will allow me a little to expoſtulate with you, and inforce the Advice with ſuitable Arguments and Motives.

There is indeed a Subjection that is common to all Orders of reaſonable Creatures, Angels, Men and Devils. All are ſubject and muſt bow the Knee to Chriſt, whether they be things in Heaven, things on Earth, or things under the Earth, *i. e.* they are put under the Dominion of the Son of God. But the Subjection I am urging is of a different Nature, free, voluntary and choſen. The one is the Subjection of Enemies and Rebels, that are under Conſtraint, and who would be glad to *break* his *Bands aſunder*, *and caſt* his *Cords from* them. The other is the Subjection of Friends, chearfully conſenting to his Government, doing Obeiſance to him as their Sovereign, and honouring him by their Devotion and Lives; and this is what I would inforce upon you by a few Conſiderations.

1ſt, Conſider he is exalted by the Father's Authority. God hath given him a Name above every Name, *&c.* ſo that your Diſobedience terminates on God, and is ultimately againſt him, and how criminal and dangerous muſt it therefore be? *He that deſpiſes me*, ſays Chriſt, *deſpiſes him that ſent me*, Luke x. 16. Juſt as the Diſhonour done to an Ambaſſador reaches the Perſon he repreſents, and is accordingly puniſhed. And will you ſet up yourſelves in Oppoſition to God, endeavour to defeat his Deſign, and make void his Purpoſes? all Attempts of this kind will be *vain* and fruitleſs. *He that ſitteth in the Heavens ſhall laugh, the Lord ſhall have them in Deriſion. He hath ſet his King upon* his *holy Hill of* Zion, and will

will maintain him there, till *all* his *Enemies* be made his *Foot ſtool.* Think of this, bow to the Lord Jeſus. It was prudent Advice, *Gamaliel* gave in the Caſe referred to, *Acts* v. 38, 39. *Refrain from theſe Men and let them alone, for if this Work or this Counſel be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, leſt haply ye be found even to fight againſt God.* The ſame may be ſaid in the Caſe before us, only there is no *if* in it; it is beyond a Suppoſition, the Counſel is certainly of God, and you cannot overthrow it. Do not therefore deny your Allegiance, or refuſe his Sceptre. The Father has given him this Name, and has appointed that you bow to it. If you do not, you not only contemn his Government; but the Authority by which it ſtands. And I may add, you deſpiſe all the Wiſdom and Goodneſs that is diſplayed in the Appointment of the Mediator; all the Grace that appears in that wonderful Undertaking: And how much Guilt and Folly muſt there be in this? How ſad the Iſſue of it at laſt?

2. It ought to have its Weight with you, that the Government committed to him, and that he has undertaken, was purely on our Account. We had revolted from the Government of the Creator, the Father's Law of Innocency and Perfection, and were become incapable Subjects of it. Now that we might not be loſt and abandoned, and all friendly Intercourſe ceaſe forever between God and us, we are put under another, a new Government, more ſuited to our State and Circumſtances, the healing reſtoring Government of the Mediator. The firſt Government ſuppoſes us without Sin, and required that we ſhould continue ſo; this conſiders us as guilty and diſtempered, and provides a proper Remedy for us in

that Caſe; hath a ſufficiency of Grace both to pardon and ſanctify.

And ſhall we not bow the Knee to him, and ſubmit to his Authority, when he is made Head and Lord over us on purpoſe to relieve and ſave us. Nor ſhould it be overlooked in the preſent Argument, that this Government calculated entirely for our Service was procured by him at the Expence of his own Blood. *He became obedient to Death: even the Death of the Croſs; and therefore God hath highly exalted him*, &c. He ſuffered that he might reign; and both ſuffered and reigns, that he may exalt and ſave us. And how ungrateful to him, as well as how great Enemies to ourſelves, muſt we be, if we will not be ſubject to him? If it be ſaid, he made way for his own Glory and Advancement by his Suffering; I anſwer, he had a Glory, was in a State of ſublime Dignity and Glory, antecedently to his Sufferings. *Glorify me*, ſays he, *with the Glory which I had with thee, before the World was*, John xvii. 5. What Addition was made to his Glory, by means of his Humiliation, we cannot pretend to determine. But I think it evident the Deſign of his Undertaking and the End of his Government was our Good, our Relief and Salvation, and the Honour of God therein; hence we find that when Redemption Work is compleated, he will give up and reſign the mediatorial Kingdom, 1 *Cor.* xv. 24, 28. In ſhort, he needed not the Knees of Angels or Men, but acted in this whole Affair, with a generous compaſſionate regard to us. And ſhall we deſpiſe all this Grace and Goodneſs, kick at his Sceptre, when without it we are miſerable. Think, Sinner, of the Folly of this Conduct, of the Ingratitude of it, and immediately bow the Knee

Knee to Christ; otherwise thou contemnest both his Cross and his Crown, his Love and his Authority.

3. Consider that you are placed under his Government, and are professedly his Subjects. You are many ways obliged to be so; but what I especially intend here, is your own Engagements to be in Subjection to him. At your Baptism, you bowed the Knee to him, and swore Allegiance. This is unquestionably the meaning of that Solemnity; *as many of you as are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*, Gal iii. 27. have put on the Christian Profession, have united yourselves to him, own yourselves of his Body, and him as your Head; so that if you do not bow to him and comport with the true design and meaning of that federal Rite and Transaction, you are perfidious, and add Perjury to your Disobedience. And whatever you think of such matters now, it will appear at last to have no small Evil in it. *God will not hold him Guiltless that taketh his Name in vain.* All the forms of your sacred Profession will condemn you, your Baptism will rise up in Judgment against you.

And as your Sin is aggravated by your outward Pretences and Profession, so will your future Punishment be too. Hence it seems the hottest place in Hell is assigned to Hypocrites; *Matth.* xxiv. 51. *He shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his Portion with the Hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.* O dread the Thoughts of being found Hypocrites at last, bowing the Knee in Mockery as his Enemies did, when they insulted him in the Days of his Flesh; this is *Judas* like, to betray him with a kiss. Further,

4. Consider the safety of his Government; when he speaks of his Subjects under the Cha-

racter of Sheep, (anſwerable to his own Character which he is pleaſed to take, that of a Shepherd) he gives us the fulleſt Aſſurance of their Security. *John* x. 27, 28. *My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal Life, and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of my Hand.* And indeed what Danger can there be to them, conſidering the univerſal Empire he is inveſted with. *He has Power over all Fleſh*; is *God over all, bleſſed for ever*, is conſtituted *Head over all things to the Church*; and here in the Text he is repreſented as having Angels, Men and Devils in Subjection to him; and what need they fear that are under the Protection of ſo mighty a Sovereign? As to the good Angels, they have no Inclination or Diſpoſition to annoy us; though ſhould they attempt it, it would be in vain; which ſome have thought to be the meaning of that Text, *Rom.* viii. 38. *I am perſuaded that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the Love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* Chriſt is Lord of Angels; they are his Servants, execute his Orders, and attend his Appointments; conſequently they can do nothing againſt us if they would. But I need not inſiſt on this, and ſtand to ſhew that you are ſafe from them; I may rather obſerve that you are ſafe by them; they are your Friends, Coadjutors and Guard. *They are miniſtring Spirits ſent forth to miniſter to the Heirs of Salvation.* They miniſter to their Bodies and to their Souls, diſcharging their Office in Obedience to Chriſt, and in innumerable Inſtances of Service and Goodneſs towards Men.

And as for evil Spirits and wicked Men, they are in Chains. So that I may here apply that of the

the Apoſtle, Rom. viii. 31. *If God be for us, who can be againſt us?* Make Chriſt your Friend, bow the Knee to him, and you are ſafe for ever. I might add, as what has no little Motive in it, and as a Matter of no ſmall Conſolation to his Subjects, that his Empire is over Hearts, over all Hearts, and eminently over the Hearts of his People. There his Throne is chiefly erected, and there the greateſt and moſt beneficial Work is carried on, as mediatorial King. He knows your Infirmities and Fears, your Wants and Weakneſſes, your Diſtempers and Dangers, and knows how to furniſh ſuitable Supplies. And no queſtion it is one eminent Inſtance of the Wiſdom, Care, and Faithfulneſs of our Lord, that he adapts his Diſcipline to our Occaſions; ſtill conducting us through every State of Things, with Safety and Advantage, as will appear in the Concluſion. O let the Children of *Zion* rejoice in their King, and let all be induced to make Choice of him and come under his Government. When you do ſo, you are under his Protection; you are in the beſt Hands, the moſt powerful Hands, and in a Word, ſhall be in Safety. Again,

5thly, Conſider the Honour of being his Subjects; of belonging to his Family, and ſtanding in the Relation of his Servants. This is but little underſtood and conſidered by moſt Men, and indeed but little believed: But Things will appear in another Light ſhortly. The Grandeur of this King will appear, and the Honour of his Servants will appear; appear vaſtly ſuperior to all Names, Titles, and Diſtinctions, here among Men. Endeavour to believe it; and accordingly rejoice in your Station, you that are his faithful Subjects and Servants; and you that are not, bow to him and conſent to be ſuch.

I might inſiſt on many Topicks to illuſtrate the Honour that belongs to you, if you heartily comport with this Duty. Angels are your Companions and Brethren, Servants with you in the ſame Family and Work. Thus when *John* was tempted to worſhip the Angel, (having received the Contents of the Apocalypſe, the glorious Light and Inſtruction given him in his Revelation) he cries out, *See thou do it not, I am thy fellow Servant*, &c. They are fellow Servants with the Saints, and, may I not ſay, Servants to them; though not inferior to them, but rather Guardians and Tutors under their common Maſter and Head, taking Care of them whilſt in their preſent State of Non-age and Infirmity. And how great an Honour is this?

And yet it is but a ſmall Part of what you may expect, when your Lord cometh in his Glory; when he will bring you with him, as the Apoſtle intimates, 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 14. You ſhall make up part of his auguſt Retinue. And then further, you ſhall ſit with him in Judgment, for ſo the Apoſtle has told us, 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. *Know ye not that the Saints ſhall judge the World?* It follows, *We ſhall judge Angels.* They will not only be preſent in Judgment, but ſome way imployed in it; judging the World, and judging Angels, bad Angels, and it may be good Angels too; for as they have been engaged under the Mediator in a long Courſe of faithful Service; that we may ſuppoſe will be reviewed; and though the Sentence will proceed from the Mouth of the Judge, the Saints may be a Sort of *Jury*, hearing the Tryal, approving and applauding the Wiſdom and Juſtice of the Sentence, adding their Suffrages and ſetting their *Amen* to it, with loyal joyful Acclamations. *This Honour have all the Saints.*

And

And then at laſt they ſhall be enthroned with their King; for he has told us, *he that overcometh ſhall ſit down with me in my Throne; even as I alſo overcame, and am ſat down with my Father in his Throne*, Rev. iii. 21. And who that believes theſe Things would ſtand Neuter, or (which is really the Caſe) remain in a State of Enmity and Oppoſition, rejecting ſuch a Government, and excluding himſelf from all the Advantage, Safety, and Glory of it? O Sinner, conſider thy Intereſt and comply with thy Duty! Once more,

6thly, Conſider the Diſtinction, the glorious, aweful, Diſtinction, that will be made between the Subjects of the Lord Jeſus, and others at the Judgment of the great Day. Then the *Upright ſhall have Dominion.* Should we take a View, a very diſtant View (for ſo it muſt be at preſent) of the Scene of Things at laſt, at the Concluſion of this glorious Government I have been ſpeaking of, when the Son of God ſhall deliver up the Kingdom to the Father, and compare the State of Men, the State of the approved Servants of God and Followers of the Lamb with that of others, compare his Subjects with Rebels; the Difference, as we can conceive of it from the imperfect Hints given, will be exceeding great and every way aweful.

A thouſand Terrors will fall on his Enemies, when he cometh from Heaven in flaming Fire to take Vengeance on them. He will deſcend with a Shout, as we are informed, 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 16. When the Voice of the Archangel and the Trump of God we there read of ſhall awaken them out of their Graves. But O with what Horror will they receive their Bodies, and with what Anguiſh will they behold the glorious Jeſus coming in the Clouds of Heaven, with Myriads of the Juſt a-

bout

bout him? and how will they wail becauſe of him? Nor can we at preſent conceive of the Terror that will fill their Conſciences, and overwhelm their Minds during the Proceſs of the great Day; whilſt all their Sins are laid open, ſet in order before their Face, and charged upon them with an Evidence that cannot be denied, and an Authority that cannot be reſiſted. Now is fulfilled more intirely what is written, *the Kings of the Earth; the great Men, and mighty Men,* and indeed all the unbelieving World, *cry to the Mountains and Rocks, ſaying, fall on us and hide us from the Face of him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb,* Rev. vi. 15, 16. Now a World, a thouſand Worlds, for the Favour of this great Sovereign and Lord. Now the Kings of the Earth would be glad to have their Crowns forgot'en, might they be admitted among his Servants and Subjects. The Sentence, the Execution, the Vengeance that follows, you have often heard of. O that you would believe and flee from the Wrath to come.

On the other Hand, the Caſe of the Righteous will be as joyous and comfortable, as the other is full of Diſtreſs and Miſery. They will appear with glorious Bodies, with Gladneſs and Triumph in their Countenances. And now ſhall all the Reproach of the Croſs and the Ignominy of their Profeſſion ceaſe. Their Maſter will own them, ſet them at his right Hand, and crown them before the Angels, and *ſo ſhall they ever be with the Lord.*

O believe theſe Things; believe the Scripture, and you muſt believe them; and immediately bow your Knee to the Son of God. Conſider the Terrors of the Lord and be perſuaded. Conſider the Honours and Glories of the Lord and be perſuaded.

ed. Chriſt is King, and will reign whether you will or not. He will appear as King and Sovereign, when all other Crowns ſhall lie in the Duſt. 'Tis now left to you to chuſe what Cauſe you will eſpouſe, which Part you will take; and according to your Choice will your Fate be to Eternity. O be wiſe, be inſtructed, kiſs the Son leſt he be angry, and ye periſh.

The Iſſue of all ſhould be (and O that it might be ſo; I ſhould think my ſelf happy, could I prevail with any of you to come into Meaſures for your own Safety and Happineſs, could I now engage one or two Subjects more for my great Lord and Maſter) the Iſſue of all, I ſay, ſhould be, that with Heart and Hand you ſubject yourſelves to the Lord, and avouch him for your Sovereign and King; reſolve that he ſhall govern you, and accordingly come under his Influence, Rule, and Law. Thus bow the Knee to the Son of God, give him a Throne in your Hearts; let his Name and Authority be great with you, his Intereſt dear to you; reverence and value every Thing that has his Name upon it; and for you to live let it be Chriſt. Manage all your Affairs both with God and with Men, as thoſe that ſerve the Lord Chriſt; as thoſe that know he has a Name above every Name, and that at his Name every Knee ſhould bow, and with this Temper of Mind attend and go through the Service he has preſcribed you, waiting for his Salvation.

JOB ii. 10.

What? Shall we receive Good at the Hand of God, and ſhall we not receive Evil?

THERE is nothing that doth more concern our Peace and Com'ort in this World, and indeed nothing doth more conſtitute our Happineſs, (that Degree of it, I mean, which we may hope for in this preſent State) than a Mind ſuited to, and comporting with the Providence of God in all the Variety thereof; that knows not only how to *receive Good*, but *Evil*, at the Hand of the Lord; as he ſhall pleaſe to diſpenſe the one or the other. When this is our Temper nothing can come amiſs to us: We have then our Feet ſhod, and Armour on, and may paſs through all Changes and Turns of Providence unhurt.

Eminent was the Attainment of the good Man, whoſe Words I have read, in this reſpect; as is plain from the Account we have of him. We firſt meet with him in a State of great Proſperity. He was the greateſt of all the Men in the Eaſt: as you are told, Chap. i. ver. 2. and as he was the greateſt, ſo the beſt; according to the Teſtimony of God himſelf, that perfectly knew, *ver.* 8. Haſt thou conſidered my Servant *Job*; that there is none like him in the Earth; a perfect and an upright Man; one that feareth God, and eſcheweth Evil. You next find him plunged in Adverſity, and that deeper than moſt Men in the World;

World; deprived of his Goods and Children, and made *naked* in one Day; notwithſtanding which, he is ſtill the ſame Man; perſevering in Religion, and expreſſing the ſame Veneration for God and Providence as before. *The Lord hath given*, ſaith he, *the Lord hath taken, bleſſed be the Name of the Lord*, ver. 21. It follows, *in all this Job ſinned not, nor charged God fooliſhly.*

A glorious Inſtance this, of Religion in its Power. How few can bear either of theſe oppoſite States, great Proſperity, or great Adverſity, without Prejudice to their Minds. *Job* you ſee, could bear both; and remain unſhaken, and unmoved by them. Once the *Candle* of the Lord *ſhined on* his *Head*; *the Secret of God was upon* his *Tabernacle*; *the Almighty was with* him, *and* his *Children about him*; he *waſhed* his *Steps in Butter, and the Rock poured* him *out Rivers of Oyl*; as he deſcribes his former State, *Chap.* xxix. 3, 4, 5. Anon, you ſee him covered with Sackcloth, and lying in Aſhes, ſtript at once of all outward Comforts: And yet ſtill he retains his Integrity; is ſtill *a perfect and upright Man*; and ſtill a Man of Piety and Devotion. He could withſtand the Allurements of Proſperity, and Shocks of Adverſity: Happy Perſon! and happy every one that can attain the like Firmneſs!

You will obſerve, that after Satan, who was the great Inſtrument of the good Man's Afflictions, had gone to the Length of his Commiſſion he had received from above; he comes to have it renewed, *Chap.* ii. *ver.* 1. Upon which occaſion God upbraids him, as it were, with the defeat of his Malice, *ver.* 3. *Haſt thou conſidered my Servant* Job; *that there is none like him in the Earth*, &c. *Still he holdeth faſt his Integrity*; *although thou movedſt me againſt him, to deſtroy him without*

without Cauſe. To this Satan replies, *ver.* 4. *Skin for Skin, and all that a Man hath will he give for his Life*, q. d. He is yet untouched in his chief Intereſt of all; the Loſs of his Goods and Children is comparatively ſmall, ſo long as he himſelf is ſafe. Any one would part with another's Skin to ſave his own. But, adds the Accuſer, *put forth thy Hand, and touch his Bone and his Fleſh; and he will curſe thee to thy Face*, ver. 5. Upon which it pleaſed God, for the Tryal of his Servant, and the Manifeſtation of his own Grace, to give the Adverſary Power againſt him: So that he ſmote him with Boils, from the Sole of his Foot to his Crown. And being all over ulcerous, he ſits among the Aſhes, in a moſt diſconſolate Condition.

In *ver.* 9. you have the ſtinging Reflections of his own Wife upon the Occaſion. *Doſt thou yet retain thy Integrity? Curſe God and dye.* The Word we render *curſe*, ſignifies both to bleſs and to curſe; and it is a Queſtion, which Tranſlation is here preferable. If we take it according to our Verſion, and underſtand it, that ſhe bid him openly curſe God; it muſt argue great Impiety in her, and that her Paſſions (which ſhe had given way to) had made her deſperate. If we render it, *bleſs God*, it will not be ſufficient to excuſe and bring off the Woman: For ſtill it muſt have an ill Meaning, (as is plain from his Reproof of her) implying a ſort of Scoff and Deriſion. It is likely, after this ſevere Stroke, *Job* continued his former Strain of Devotion; bleſſing God as before, when he had taken his Eſtate and Children: With which this unkind and unthoughtful Woman upbraids him, *q. d.* See what you get by your Religion: Go on ſtill bleſſing, till you periſh.

In the Verſe, wherein is my Text, the good Man rebukes her, as there was juſt Occaſion. *Thou ſpeakeſt*, ſays he, *as one of the fooliſh Women ſpeaketh.* And then immediately adds, *What? Shall we receive Good at the Hand of God; and ſhall we not receive Evil?* A noble triumph of Mind in the midſt of great Diſtreſs! And had he perſevered fully in the ſame Temper, (as it is granted he did in the Main; though not without a great Mixture of human Frailty and Weakneſs,) he had ſuffered leſs by his Loſſes and Tryals. In the Words we have two things.

1. The Reſentment the good Man expreſſed at his Wife's fooliſh and impious Speech. *Thou ſpeakeſt as one of the fooliſh*, i. e. wicked *Women.* For that is often the ſenſe of the fooliſh in Scripture. However underſtanding Perſons may be, and how wiſely ſoever they may ſpeak in other Matters, if they know nothing of God, and ſpeak and act to the Diſparagement of Providence and Religion, they are fooliſh Perſons, and will be found ſo in the End. *Curſe God and dye*, ſaith ſhe. This was her Advice, and it was very ſhocking. Some of the *Heathens* uſed to reproach their Gods when any great Adverſity befel them. The *Idumeans*, it is probable, did ſo; among whom *Job*'s Wife might have her Education. The antient *Perſians*, who are ſaid to have worſhipped Fire, as a God, uſed to threaten to extinguiſh it by Water, when enraged by any grievous Calamity. And it may be, to ſome ſuch irreligious Temper, the Prophet (at leaſt) alludes, *Iſa.* viii. 21. *They ſhall fret themſelves, and curſe their King, and their God, and look upward.* *Job*'s Wife, if ſhe had not the Principles of theſe Enemies of true Religion, it ſeems on this Occaſion falls into their Diſpoſition and Language; for which he

ſharply

ſharply rebukes her. *Thou ſpeakeſt as one of the fooliſh Women ſpeaketh*, like one void of all Religion, and the Fear of God.

2. We have the Reaſon of his Cenſure, and of his own Calmneſs under the preſent, very ſevere Providence. *What? ſhall we receive Good at the Hand of God, and not Evil?* By receiving Evil at the Hand of God, is meant accepting it, taking it in good Part, chearfully ſubmitting to the Providence of God in it; as will be more fully explained afterwards. This he intimates is our Duty, and that it is abſurd and unreaſonable not to do ſo.

What I deſign from theſe Words is only to make a few Obſervations upon them; and I ſhall improve each of them as I proceed

Prop. I. That it is an Argument of a very fooliſh and wicked Mind, to entertain hard Thoughts of God, and quarrel with his Providence, when he ſeems to go contrary to us therein.

This was the very thing *Job* condemns in his Wife. The Rod of God had fallen upon her in a very awful Manner; her Children were ſlain, her Eſtate plundered, and her Husband made a Spectacle of Miſery before her Eyes. And this ſhe could not bear; but in a daring Manner riſes up againſt Heaven, and gives vent to her Paſſion in theſe horrid Words, *Curſe God and dye.* Whereupon her Husband replies, *thou ſpeakeſt as one of the fooliſh Women ſpeaketh*, repreſenting her Speech as profane, as indeed it was; and that in this Inſtance at leaſt, ſhe had gone into the Principles of Irreligion.

Which is the Caſe of all that allow themſelves a Liberty of arraigning the Providence of God. Whenever we do ſo, and as far as we do it, we run into the Guilt of *Job*'s Wife. Our Buſineſs

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is not to find fault, but to ſubmit; not to diſpute, but to reſign. Two Conſiderations among others, ſhould ſilence all our Complaints on theſe Occaſions.

The one is, that if we preſume to criticize on Providence and judge of the Equity of its Proceedings; it is many to one, our Cenſures will be at random, and miſtaken. We have not Penetration enough to diſcern what is fitteſt to be done in this Government of the World, or in our own particular Affairs; we can ſee but a little way into things; do not underſtand the Views and Deſigns of divine Providence; what Connection this or that Event has with ſome other diſtant, great and profitable Events. *All theſe things are againſt me*, ſays *Jacob*, reflecting on the ſuppoſed Loſs of his Children, of *Joſeph* in particular, *Gen.* xlii. 36. And yet God was carrying on great Deſigns by the Means he ſo much diſliked, not only for the Advancement of his Family, but was laying the Foundation of a glorious Scene of Providence, the Memorial of which will laſt as long as the Bible. We often paſs a wrong Sentence concerning this or that Providence, and in our haſte ſay things that are very unjuſt, and afterwards ſee reaſon to make a Recantation.

And then further, as we are not qualified to cenſure the Providence of God, ſo we have no Right to do it. He is God, and we are Creatures; he the Potter, we the Clay, and conſequently he is not to give any Account of his Matters to us. He does what he pleaſes *in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth*, and none ought to *ſay unto him, what doeſt thou?* Let us therefore conſider our Place and attend to the Duty of it; which is, as I ſaid, not to object, but ſubmit. *The Lord gave, and the*

Lord has taken away, ſays Job, *bleſſed be the Name of the Lord.* He owns the divine Sovereignty, and quiets himſelf with the Thoughts thereof; without any indecent Expoſtulations or bold Inquiries; wherefore God dealt thus with him. So *Eli*, when that dreadful Meſſage was delivered againſt his Houſe, 1 *Sam.* iii. 18. *It is the Lord; let him do what ſeemeth him Good.* To the ſame Purpoſe the Pſalmiſt, I was dumb; I opened not my Mouth, becauſe thou didſt it, *Pſal.* xxxix. 9. Thus we ſhould always meet and welcome the Providence of God in all its Appearances, with a worſhipping ſubmiſſive Frame; *be ſtill and know that* he is *God.* Had *Job*'s Wife had this turn of Mind, been under due Impreſſions from the Sovereignty, Wiſdom and Authority of divine Providence; ſhe had not ſpoke *as one of the fooliſh Women ſpeaketh.* Nor ſhall we avoid the like Impiety, till we know God and ourſelves in ſome good Meaſure, and have learn'd to confeſs our Meanneſs and his Perfections. But I go on to another Obſervation from the Words.

Prop. II. That there is a Mixture of Good and Evil in moſt Mens Portion and Lot here; I might ſay in every ones, more or leſs. This is implied in the Text, *Shall we receive Good and not Evil* at the Hand of the Lord? Intimating, that all receive Good, and ought to expect Evil; and ſhould endeavour aright to receive both.

Indeed theſe Ingredients are not equally mixed in every one's Cup: Some have a larger Meaſure of Adverſity than others. It is a grievous Complaint the Pſalmiſt makes in the lxxxviiith *Pſalm*; *I have cried Day and Night before thee,* ſaith he, *my Soul is full of Troubles; thou haſt laid me in the loweſt Pit, in Darkneſs, in the Deeps, thy Wrath lyeth hard upon me, and thou haſt afflicted me with*

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all thy Waves. And again, *I am afflicted and ready to dye from my Youth up; while I ſuffer thy Terrors I am diſtracted.* The Burden, you ſee, lay heavy upon him, and he ſpeaks as if it had lain long; even *from his Youth up.* And this is the Caſe of many. Their Afflictions, like *Job*'s Meſſengers, come cloſe at the Heels of one another. One Cloud has no ſooner diſcharged itſelf upon them, but another gathereth. Others have a more free and eaſy Paſſage through the World; fewer Interruptions of their Peace, Health and outward Comforts; have fewer evil things and more good things than others.

But notwithſtanding this, I reckon all have a Variety and Mixture: None have all *evil things*, without *good things*; nor all good without evil. So that every one may join with the Pſalmiſt, and ſay, *I will ſing of Mercy and Judgment, unto thee, O Lord, will I ſing*, Pſal. ci. 1. Whoever looks through his own Life and ſurveys the Courſe of Providence towards him, will find the Pſalmiſt's Argument and Song before him; that there has been Mercy and Judgment, many good things, and ſome evil things interpoſed. And ſeveral Reaſons might be aſſigned for this. For Inſtance,

All Men have ſome good and ſome evil in them; this is true of the whole World in ſome Senſe, much more of the Church, of ſanctified holy Perſons. They have a Mixture of good and evil, (moral good and evil) and it is but fit there ſhould be an anſwerable Mixture in the Conduct of Providence towards them. Should they receive no good, their Virtues would ſeem to be neglected; and ſhould they receive no evil, their Sins would ſeem to be overlooked.

Further, there is a great deal of Wiſdom and Goodneſs in this Variety of providential Diſpen-

ſations. Herein God accommodates himſelf to our Circumſtances and Occaſions. Such is our Frailty, that we can neither bear continued uninterrupted Proſperity, nor Adverſity. The one would ſink and oppreſs us, the other would lift us up; and either of them would deſtroy us. And hence it is, that God is pleaſed to ſhift the Scene, and ſo often change his Methods with us; like a skilful and kind Phyſician, that attends every Symptom; and adapts his Regimen and Medicines thereunto. The Pſalmiſt, while he ſpeaks his own Caſe, ſeems to repreſent that of all good Men; *Lord, by thy Favour thou haſt made my Mountain to ſtand ſtrong. Thou didſt hide thy Face, and I was troubled*, Pſal. xxx. 7. And after he had uttered Complaint in his Diſtreſs and Trouble; he adds, *ver.* 11. *Thou haſt turned for me my Mourning into Dancing: Thou haſt put off my Sackcloth, and girded me with Gladneſs.* Our Life is a Piece of Checker-work; Good and Evil, Affliction and Comfort is interwoven in it, with a Wiſdom and Goodneſs that makes a beautiful Scene, did we rightly underſtand it; and which is wholly referred to our Intereſt and Advantage, if we knew how to improve the Variety.

Let us therefore, as the proper Uſe and Improvement of what has been ſaid, be thankful for this Inſtance of the Care and Tenderneſs of our heavenly Father. *If need be*, ſays the Apoſtle, *ye are in Heavineſs through manifold Temptations*, 1 Pet. i. 6. He does not willingly afflict or grieve the Children of Men: Though the Fathers of our Fleſh may chaſten us for their Pleaſure, yet he does ſo only for our Profit; that we may be Partakers of his Holineſs. His Purpoſes are all kind, and when he puts any Ingredients of (what we call) Evil into our Cup, it is for our Good.

Let us therefore, I ſay, be thankful for his Diſcipline and Government, and reſign to it with all Chearfulneſs. He knows when to adminiſter Cordials, when Corroſives, or harſher Medicines: And all his ways are Mercy, Faithfulneſs and Love.

In the mean time let us wait for the State above, where we ſhall receive Good, and only Good, at the Hand of God. *If need be*, will then be out of Date: There will be no further need that we ſhould be in Heavineſs. We ſhall there have dropt all our Evil; have done ſinning, and conſequently have done ſuffering any more; according to that (which will be moſt fully accompliſhed in Heaven) *Rev.* xxi. 4. *God ſhall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes; and there ſhall be no more Death; neither Sorrow nor Crying; neither ſhall there be any more Pain, for the former things are paſſed away.* Here we receive both Good and Evil; and our Circumſtances conſidered, it is well for us that we meet with both. But hereafter (in the heavenly State) Evil has no place: The former things (troubleſome things) are paſſed away, and nothing remains but Reſt, and Joy, and Triumph for ever. Another Remark which my Text ſuggeſts, is,

Prop. III. That both *Good* and *Evil* are from *the Hand of God. Shall we receive Good and not receive Evil at the Hand of the Lord?* Intimating that we receive both at his Hand: A Truth ſo frequently and fully expreſſed in Scripture, that I need not inſiſt upon the Proof of it.

As to *Good*, there can be no Queſtion whether God be the Author of it, *Every good and perfect Gift is from above*, as the Apoſtle tells us, *and cometh from the Father of Light*, James i. 17. And though he be not the Author of Sin or

moral Evil; yet natural Evil, the Evil of Suffering and Puniſhment is from him, and that univerſally: *Shall there be Evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it?* Amos iii. 6. i. e. any Afflictions, Calamities, Sorrows, or Troubles. I ſhall only obſerve here, that tho' ſecond Cauſes may contribute to the effect, and have their Influence upon it; the Hand of God is nevertheleſs to be acknowledged therein. This is agreeable to the Divinity *Job* had received. For tho' the Devil was the great Inſtigator to the Miſchief; and the *Chaldeans* and the *Sabeans* had plundered him; yet you ſee he looks over them all: *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.* So *David*, when *Shimei* reviled him, *let him alone, for the Lord hath bidden him.* Nothing adverſe, no Evil can befall us or ours, but by the divine Direction or Permiſſion, and we are to receive it with the ſame dutiful Subjection and Submiſſion, as if we ſaw the Hand of God ſtretched out in a viſible manner, producing the Event. Let us endeavour to believe this; and it will teach us many good Leſſons of no ſmall Uſe and Advantage to us. And hereupon let me obſerve once more,

Prop. IV. That as *Good* and *Evil* are from *the Hand of God*, ſo we are to *receive* both, Evil as well as Good, with an equal Mind; accept and take them in good Part as coming from his Hand.

This being the main Intent of the Words, it would require a larger Diſcourſe than I have room for. I can only hint that it is to receive or accept *Evil* at the Hand of the Lord; and what Reaſons we have to do ſo.

I. I ſhall ſuggeſt what it is to *receive Evil at the Hand of God:* What is implied and included therein. And

1. It

1. It implies, that we own the Hand of God in it, that what Evil we ſuffer is by his Ordination and Appointment. This muſt be admitted as a Principle; or we ſhall never, in a right manner, receive Evil from him. *Not a Sparrow*, ſays Chriſt, *falls to the Ground, without your heavenly Father: The very Hairs of your Head are all numbred*, Mat. x. 29, 30. Much leſs ſhall we ourſelves fall, or any Evil befall us without his Providence; ſince we *are of much more Value than many Sparrows*; as it follows there, *ver.* 31. Now to accept Evil at the Hand of God, implies this; a Conviction of it as an unqueſtionable Truth; and conſequently that we acknowledge God in all our Afflictions, owning him the Author.

2. It implies a Veneration and Reverence of God, and his Perfections manifeſted in his Providences towards us. To receive Evil at the Hand of the Lord is, not barely to ſuffer it; for that we muſt do, whether we conſent or not; thus *Job*'s Wife received Evil as well as himſelf; but it ſignifies that we do it with a ſuitable Temper of Mind; and with a dutiful, honourable acknowledgment of God therein. Particularly

We are to acknowledge his Sovereignty; that he has a Right to do what he doth; that he does not injure us in any of the Evils he permits or ſends. *Be ſtill and know that I am God*, Pſal. xlvi. 10. *He is God:* This we ſhould conſider, and not lift up a rebellious Hand, or ſuffer a diſloyal Thought to riſe in our Minds againſt him. And indeed nothing would contribute more to reconcile us to the Providence of God, in any of the Evils that befall us, than juſt Apprehenſions of his Authority. A Child will take that Correction from his Father, and a Servant from his Maſter, which he would not bear from another:

The Reaſon is, they have a Right to correct, which a Stranger has not. And this is the Caſe of Chriſtians; as the Apoſtle intimates, (arguing from the Relation between God and us) *Heb.* xii. 9. *We have had Fathers of our Fleſh which corrected us, and we gave them Reverence. Shall we not much rather be in Subjection to the Father of our Spirits and live?* No earthly Fathers or Maſters have that Authority over us that God has. This we ſhould conſider, and endeavour to bring our Minds under the Impreſſion and Influence of his Sovereignty; and when he ſmites, kiſs the Rod, and adore the Hand that holds it.

Again, we are to own his Juſtice in all his Diſpenſations, and in the Evils he inflicts. We muſt not look upon his Sovereignty as the Exerciſe of mere Power; (arbitrary Power) but conſider it (as it always is) in Connection with the greateſt Juſtice and Equity. He never puniſhes but for Sin; and never farther than our Sins deſerve, and need. This we muſt receive as a Principle, and lay as a Foundation of all our Intercourſe with God in his Providence. *Righteous art thou, O Lord,* ſaith the Prophet, *when I plead with thee: Yet let me talk with thee of thy Judgments. Wherefore doth the Wicked proſper?* Jer. xii. 1. We may not always underſtand the Reaſon of this or that Diſpenſation; but we may be aſſured of this; that the Judge of all the Earth will do right, and that there is no Iniquity with him.

Further, we are to own his Wiſdom, believing that all Things conſidered, what is done is fitteſt to be done, with reſpect to his Government; and fitteſt with reſpect to our Intereſt. Nor ſhould it be any Hinderance of, or Objection againſt, ſuch a Concluſion, that we do not diſcern

cern the Tendency and Uſefulneſs of this or that Providence. Sometimes we may ſee this at preſent; ſee the wiſe Deſigns of Heaven in its Diſpenſations towards us: Sometimes we ſee it afterwards. But however this be, 'tis ſufficient that all is conducted by infinite Wiſdom, in whoſe Adminiſtrations there is no Error.

I add, we are to own the Goodneſs and Mercy of God in the Evil we receive from his Hands: Of which we may find innumerable Inſtances even in the greateſt Evils we ſuffer; as I ſhall afterwards more particularly obſerve. Mercy moderates our Afflictions; ſhortens, interrupts them, and mixes with all the Circumſtances of them. This is obvious to more attentive Chriſtians, and where there is leſs Judgment and diſcerning of theſe matters, yet every one, not quite ſtupid, muſt joyn with that of *Ezra*, and ſay, *this is come upon us for our evil Deeds, and for our great Treſpaſſes: And God hath puniſhed us leſs than our Iniquities deſerve*, Ezra ix. 13.

This Senſe of Things, this Acknowledgment of God, and Reverence of his Providence, is imply'd in receiving Evil at his Hand. We accept Evil from him, receive it aright, when we ſee and own his Influence therein, own his Sovereignty, Authority, Juſtice, Wiſdom, Mercy and Goodneſs; and hereupon have our Minds filled with a ſuitable Veneration of his Providence. I may ſubjoin as what naturally follows,

3. That to receive Evil at the Hand of God is to acquieſce in the Diſpenſation without finding fault; without complaining, murmuring or objecting againſt what is done. A great deal of this was found in *Job*'s Temper, as is plain from thoſe admirable Words I have more than once mentioned; *The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away,*

bleſſed

bleſſed be the Name of the Lord. And ſomething of it ſeems imply'd in the Text, *Shall we receive Good at the Hand of God, and ſhall we not receive Evil?* We are to receive both, and both with much the ſame Temper: *In every Thing giving Thanks,* according to the Apoſtles Exhortation. And indeed, that Conviction and Senſe of the divine Perfections mentioned before, will make way for this, and give us a Reſt and Complacency of Mind in all his Providences. We are to abate nothing of our Eſteem, Reverence and Love of God, whatever he doth; or becauſe he hath done this or that, which may ſeem diſagreeable to us; being aſſured of this, that nothing can proceed from infinite Wiſdom, that is unwiſe; or from infinite Goodneſs that is unkind. I am now to ſhew,

II. Why we ſhould thus receive or accept Evil at the Hand of God. And

1. It is one Reaſon, and of no ſmall Weight, that it is God at whoſe Hands we receive it. This *Job* takes notice of, and ſeems to argue from, in his Reproof to his Wife. *Shall we receive Good at the Hand of God, and ſhall we not receive Evil?* And we find the ſame Conſideration influencing other good Men to the like Submiſſion. *I was dumb,* ſays the Pſalmiſt, *and opened not my Mouth, becauſe thou didſt it.* And ſaith another, *It is the Lord: Let him do what ſeemeth him Good.* When we receive Evil at the Hands of Men, we may (ordinarily at leaſt) juſtly complain of it. It may be they had no good Intention in afflicting us; or they had no Right to afflict and grieve us; they are both unkind and injurious in what they do. But this cannot be ſaid of the bleſſed God. He is the Lord, the great Sovereign of the World, and whenever he

brings Sufferings upon us, he hath a Right to do what he doth, and we owe him a full Submiſſion. This we ſhould conſider on all ſuch Occaſions, and endeavour to ſee his Hand, and be ſtill and quiet under it. There is a great deal in that Admonition ſo frequently ſubjoined to the Injunctions of the Levitical Law: *I am the Lord.* And the ſame is made the Preface to the Ten Commandments, *I am the Lord thy God, thou ſhalt have no other Gods before me,* &c. He is the Lord our God, and conſequently we ſhould be ſo prepared, as to hearken to him in every thing he commands, ſo as to ſubmit to him in every Thing he appoints. And indeed an impatient quarrelſome Temper, that is always cenſuring Providence and finding fault with his Adminiſtration, doth in effect ſtrike at his Throne, and ſay he is not God, or ſhall not be God to him.

Not that we need to act herein and ſubmit to his Pleaſure, merely from the Influence and Awe of abſolute Authority. For though he is Sovereign, and muſt be obeyed; there is that Wiſdom and Goodneſs in his Government, as may make it eaſy and pleaſant to us. He is righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works. *The Sceptre of his Kingdom is a right Sceptre,* Pſal. xlv. 6. When we repreſent him to ourſelves under the Notion of Lord and Sovereign, there is more than Power in the Idea, if we underſtand it truly. He is not only the greateſt, but the beſt of Beings; and conſequently, whatever comes from his Hands, ſhould be well thought of, and taken well.

But ſome may object the Evils we ſuffer and complain of are from the Hands of Men. I anſwer, they are alſo from the Hand of God. *Shimei* could not curſe *David, if the Lord had not bidden*

bidden him. The *Sabeans* and *Chaldeans* robbed *Job* of his Cattle; and yet this doth not hinder his Acknowledgment of God in that Event. We may ſay in every Caſe of this Nature, and to every Inſtrument of our Sufferings, as our Lord to *Pilate*, *John* xix. 11. *Thou couldſt have no Power at all againſt me, except it were given thee from above.* Let us therefore in all the Evils, Afflictions and Tryals we meet with, whatever and whoever are the Means of them, look up to God, eye his Hand, and endeavour to expreſs a becoming Reſignation.

2. We ſhould conſider that we receive Good at the Hand of the Lord as well as Evil: And this is a Conſideration that is alſo ſuggeſted in the Text. All our Comforts, and Enjoyment, of every kind, are from him. He diſpenſes Good to us, in the Time, Manner and Circumſtances, he ſees fit. And ſhall we receive Good from his Hand, conſtant Good, flowing in an uninterrupted Current? And ſhall we not receive Evil alſo, when in the ſame Wiſdom and Sovereignty he pleaſes to appoint it? Eſpecially, if it be conſidered,

3. That we receive much more Good than Evil at his Hand; this all muſt acknowledge in their own Caſe; for though the Proportion and Mixture of Good and Evil is very different in the Lives of different Perſons; yet none, even of the moſt afflicted and deſtitute can ſay, upon a fair Computation, but their good Things far exceed their Evil.

Survey the Hiſtory of Providence; all the Inſtances of divine Bounty towards you; and then make a Judgment. You have your Being, your Senſes, continued Life and Health, it may be, at leaſt in convenient Intervals and proper Meaſures;

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the uſe of your Reaſon, and all your Faculties, Food, Raiment, Houſes, Friends and a great Variety of outward Comforts; to which may be added (if you are Chriſtians) the whole Claſs of ſpiritual Privileges; the innumerable ſpiritual Bleſſings God hath bleſſed you with in Chriſt Jeſus. Nor ſhould you overlook the occaſional Favours of his Providence. He hath not only fed you all your Life long, but redeemed your Life from Deſtruction, often delivered your Souls from Death, your Eyes from Tears, and your Feet from falling. Beſides ſtated Mercies which cannot be numbred, there are many of this ſort, (ſpecial occaſional Providences) that ought not to be left out of the Account. It is ſaid of *Antipater*, that when he was dying, and came to reckon up the good Things he had enjoyed, he forgot not to put in the Liſt, his ſafe Voyage from *Sicily* to *Athens*.

Now when theſe good Things in all the Variety of them are ſummoned up, collected, and ſet againſt our evil Things; put in the Scale againſt them; how little, inconſiderable and light will the one appear compared with the other? It may be, you have had a few Days, a few Weeks, or ſome of you a few Months Sickneſs; and all the reſt of your Life has been Eaſe and Health; a few Diſappointments in ſome of your Concerns; but conſtant Proſperity in the reſt; have been deprived of ſome Comforts, but have an hundred more, and greater continued. And ſhall we receive ſo much good at the Hand of God, and ſhall we object againſt the Evil? That ſmall Degree of it, he pleaſes at any Time to exerciſe us with.

Had we received all Evil, it might have imbittered our Spirits, and rendered our Subjection more

more uneaſy; had we received more Evil than Good, I won't ſay, it would have excuſed our complaining, but the Tryal had been greater. But when it is otherwiſe; and the Good ſo much preponderates or outweighs the Evil, we are utterly inexcuſable if we murmur; I might ſay, if we are not highly thankful.

4. It will ſtrengthen the Argument, if we conſider that we are far from deſerving the Good we have received, but we more than deſerve all our Evil. This needs no Proof to the humble, and ſuch as underſtand themſelves: And as for the proud, they will not admit of any. *I am unworthy*, ſaith *Jacob*, *of the leaſt of all thy Mercies*, Gen. xxxii. 10. How much more unworthy are we of the greateſt of them, and of all of them?

But then on the other Hand, there is no Evil that we ſuffer, but Sin has deſerved it; and even greater Evil, and more Evil. We are ſtrangely ſtupid, and inſenſible, if we do not ſubſcribe to that Confeſſion of *Ezra*: *Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our Iniquities deſerve.* In ſhort, we have a Multitude of Mercies that we muſt attribute to the mere Bounty and Kindneſs of God towards us; and fewer Evils than we could have expected, and ſhould have received, had God dealt with us after our Iniquities. Nor indeed doth any Thing ſhort of Hell anſwer the demerit of our Sins. And ſhall we yet complain, and *not receive Evil at the Hand of God?* A little Evil, when we have deſerved ſo much? And that in the midſt of ſo much undeſerved Good?

5. We ſhould receive and accept Evil as well as Good at the Hand of God, becauſe we need both. This was hinted before, and it is a Conſideration that ſhould reconcile us to the Providence of God, and make us pleaſed with that wiſe

and

and wholeſome Variety there is in it. In Heaven there is all Good, no Evil of ſuffering; the Reaſon is, there is no Evil of Sin; no Diſtempers or Maladies of Mind; and conſequently, no need of Chaſtiſement, which like Phyſick is neceſſary in our preſent State. But as Things now are with us, a continued Proſperity would undo us. This the Apoſtle intimates in the plaineſt Terms, *Heb.* xii. 6, 7, 8. *Whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every Son whom he receiveth; If ye endure chaſtening, God dealeth with you as with Sons; for what Son is he whom the Father chaſteneth not? But if ye be without Chaſtiſement, whereof all are Partakers, then are ye Baſtards and not Sons.* The Diſcipline of our heavenly Father is always wiſe and kind; and when the Rod is neceſſary, it muſt not be with-holden. I know, O Lord, that thy Judgments are right, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, and that thou in Faithfulneſs haſt afflicted me, *Pſal.* cxix. 75. Indeed he doth not willingly afflict, it is only *if need be:* But if there be need for it, his Tenderneſs and Faithfulneſs require that he ſhould not deny the Correction. How reaſonable is it then, we ſhould receive Evil at the Hand of God, ſince it is no more than we need! Nay,

6. This ſort of Diſcipline is what we ourſelves conſent to, and often ask of God. I do not mean that we pray for Evil as ſuch, or can be pleaſed with Adverſity for its own Sake: But then we pray, that God would take us under his Conduct, that he would diſpoſe of us, and order the whole State of our Affairs for the beſt; that he would guide us by his Counſel, and afterwards receive us to Glory; that he would not deny his Rod when it is wanted, nor break it, nor lay it aſide till it has done its Work; that he would not

not regard our Reluctancy, and fooliſh Oppoſition, but continue and repeat the Stroke, as he ſees occaſion; and that his Soul may not ſpare for our crying.

This the Chriſtian prays for: For this he commits and reſigns himſelf into the Hand of God. Nor is there any Thing in the World he is more importunate for, than that God would take him under his ſpecial Government, and ſuit his Diſcipline (in theſe Reſpects) to his Circumſtances. And ſhall we find fault with what we have aſked, and quarrel with Providence; when it may be, the very Thing that grieves us, and that we complain of, is the anſwer of Prayer? Would we not have his beſt Conduct? And if this Circumſtance had been out of it, it might not have been ſo. Would we not have a Remedy for every Diſeaſe? A ſuitable Application made by our great Phyſician? Well, this is what God doth, and yet we find fault. We conſent he ſhould govern us, beg he would take us under his Care, and then, by a ſtrange Inconſiſtency, cenſure his Adminiſtration. I will only add,

7. That the evil Things we receive are deſigned for our Good; and may be improved to Advantage, if it be not our own fault. This is implied, in what I ſuggeſted under the laſt Head, and may be inferred from it, and is often affirmed in Scripture. *We know*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that all things work together for Good to them that love God*, Rom. viii. 28. Which the Pſalmiſt found Matter of Experience; as many thouſands have done beſides him. *It is good for me*, ſaith he, *that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes*, Pſal. cxix. 71. And again, *ver.* 67. *Before I was afflicted I went aſtray; but now have I kept thy Word.*

There

There are many profitable Leſſons that we learn by Afflictions. For Inſtance, they tend to ſhew us the Vanity of the World; the Inſufficiency of Creature Comforts to make us happy: For when we are deprived of them, or they are any way imbittered to us, we then ſenſibly find they are not fit to be our Portion.

They tend to make us reflect on our Miſcarriages, and excite us to Repentance. *We are verily guilty*, ſay they, *concerning our Brother, and therefore is this Diſtreſs come upon us*, Gen. xlii. 21. The Caſe was evident before, that they were guilty, (and ſhamefully guilty) having to gratify their Pride and Envy, ſold their Brother into Slavery; but this they did not conſider, till their Affliction had made them thoughtful, and brought their Sin to their Remembrance.

Further, they give Occaſion for the Exerciſe, and make Way for the Improvement of Grace: Hence that of the Apoſtle, *James* i. 2, 3. *My Brethren, count it all Joy, when ye fall into diverſe Temptations; knowing that the tryal of your Faith worketh Patience.* And to the ſame Purpoſe is that *Rom.* v. 3, 4 *We glory in Tribulations; knowing that Tribulation worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope.* Afflictions are God's Furnace, in which he conſumes our Droſs; his School in which he trains us up for more eminent Religion; there we learn Wiſdom, Courage, Fortitude and Firmneſs of Mind; and are ſet above that Delicacy, and Littleneſs of Soul, that makes us unfit, either to do or ſuffer, or for any of the more eminent Services of the Chriſtian Life.

And as they diſcipline our Spirits, harden and ſtrengthen our Minds: So they convince us of our Dependence on God, and lead us to more free and conſtant Converſe with him. *Is any Man*

afflicted, let him pray, Jam. v. 13. That is the proper Seaſon of Devotion; what the State of Things then peculiarly calls for: and we find that generally the Temper of our Minds agrees thereto. 'Tis indeed a Shame for us that we need ſuch a Summons into the divine Preſence; when 'tis ſo much our Intereſt, and Honour to be there. But God is pleaſed in his Condeſcenſion and Grace to conſider our Infirmity and Wants; and take Methods with us accordingly.

And then I may obſerve, that the evil Things, the Afflictions and Grievances that are interſperſed in our Life, tend to make us know our ſelves; they diſcover our Principles, our Heart, and inward Frame; where our Affections are placed, and what is our chief Good; and in general, whether we are ſincere in the Profeſſion of Religion or not. Something of this is intimated in the Devil's Plea againſt *Job*. *Doth* Job *fear God for nought? Haſt thou not made a Hedge about him, and about his Houſe, and about all that he hath on every Side? Thou haſt bleſſed the Work of his Hands, and his Subſtance is increaſed in the Land. But put forth thy Hand now, and touch all that he hath; and he will curſe thee to thy Face*, Job i. 9, 10, 11. *q. d.* He's a mercenary Creature; pretends Religion only for worldly Advantage: But deprive him of this, and then ſee what his Religion will come to. And ſo far the Devil was right; that we are never ſo effectually tried, what we are, and upon what Principles we act, as when under deep Affliction. If we can bleſs God when he takes away, as well as when he gives; depend upon him, and keep up the ſame Regard to Religion and Veneration of Providence, how bad ſoever Things are with us in the World; this ſhews the Truth and Power of Religion in us. If when the Fig-Tree does

not bloſſom, *&c.* we can yet rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of our Salvation, 'tis an Argument for us that our Hearts are upright with him, and that we have choſen him for our Portion, our God, and our all; ſeeing we can live upon him in the Abſence of the Creature.

In ſhort, Afflictions (the evil Things we meet with) are often the greateſt Means, both of improving and comforting us. The former of theſe is what ſome of the Heathen had a Senſe of; inſomuch that they laid it down for a Maxim (a remarkable and certain Truth) that there never was a great Man without great Afflictions: and the latter all Chriſtians experience more or leſs; that when *Sufferings abound, Conſolation abounds alſo,* 2 Cor. i. 5. When we are deprived of the Creature, and find leaſt there, we find moſt in God. We are then more at Liberty to attend his Service; more excited to look beyond theſe lower Things; more inclined to ſeek the Comforts of Religion, and better diſpoſed to receive them.

Once more, there is this Good in the Evils we may receive at the Hands of God; that they ſhew us the Difference between this and the other State; tend to wean our Hearts and Affections from the World, and raiſe them above it. Had we no evil Things here, we ſhould forget the good Things above; be for repoſing our ſelves under the periſhing Gourd of created Delights. But when God puts Gall and Wormwood into our Cup, we begin to diſtaſte it, and look out for a more ſubſtantial Happineſs.

And thus I have given you ſeveral Reaſons why we ought to receive Evil as well as good at the Hand of God. And now, as the Application of what has been ſaid, let us endeavour to compoſe our Minds to a Compliance with his Provi-

dence; and particularly, in all Afflictions he is pleaſed to exerciſe us with. Afflictions will come. God, in Faithfulneſs, muſt afflict us; unleſs he caſt us off, and caſhier us from his Family and Care. The World we are in is full of Changes; our Bodies are mortal; we have the Seeds of Diſtempers and Death in our ſelves; all our Comforts are uncertain and fluctuating; and nothing more vain than to promiſe our ſelves *Stability* in Things, whoſe Nature is ſuch as not to admit of it. We are to remember where we are, (in an evil World;) and while we our ſelves have ſo much Evil about us, no Wonder we meet with Evil in it.

Endeavour therefore to be prepared for all Events. Reſign to Providence, and learn to receive any Thing at the Hand of God, he ſhall appoint. All the Particulars offered as Reaſons for your Submiſſion, are ſo many *Motives* to the Duty; and as ſuch I leave them with you without farther Enlargement on the Head. Only I ſhall add a few Hints, by way of *Direction*, for your Aſſiſtance in this Matter; and ſo conclude.

1. If you would take all well that God doth, receive Evil as well as Good at his Hand; endeavour to preſerve a juſt Veneration of God and Providence; believe that he governs the World, and poſſeſs your Minds with a firm Perſuaſion of the Perfection of his Government; that he doth all Things in the beſt manner.

Conſider your ſelves as in the Hands of God; that he has the Diſpoſal of you and your Affairs. Even when your fellow Creatures (whoever they are) are Inſtruments of your Grief, you may and ſhould ſtill ſee the divine Agency therein; being aſſured that *Affliction cometh not forth of the Duſt; neither doth Trouble ſpring out of the Ground*, Job v. 6.

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And then you ſhould not only acknowledge God in your Affairs, and in all your evil Things, but reverence his Providence, and believe that he doth all wiſely and well; that he is Righteous in all his Diſpenſations; that *this* particularly, (whatever it is) *cometh forth from the Lord of Hoſts, who is wonderful in Counſel, and excellent in working*, Iſai. xxviii. 29. If he appoints you Evil as well as Good, this is the effect of his Wiſdom, Care and Kindneſs towards you. He hath done this in ſo fit a Proportion, and with ſuch Diſtinction of proper Intervals, that his whole Adminiſtration is thereby become more beautiful, and to you more beneficial. *He has ſet Proſperity and Adverſity, the one over-againſt the other; to the End that Man ſhould find nothing after him*, Eccleſ. vii. 14. Nothing amiſs, and nothing to correct in his Scheme of Providence. O let us believe this, and there will be an end of our Diſputes, Objections and Cavils. We ſhall be able to kiſs every Rod, and receive any Evil at the Hand of the Lord.

2. Endeavour rightly to underſtand the Value of thoſe Things you call *Evil*, and that are apt to give you the greateſt Diſturbance. They are either the want of ſome good Things you would have, or the Infliction of ſome poſitive Evil you would not have.

The former is the more common Cauſe of our Complaints. We are deprived of ſome Things we would have; and this grieves us. But here we ſhall find, if we examine Matters thoroughly, that we really do not want theſe Things, they are not neceſſary; we may be comfortable and happy without them. This might be ſhewn in all thoſe Inſtances of Loſs, which are apt ſo much to diſquiet and grieve us: And here a Maxim

of Wiſdom offers, that we ſhould all admit, *viz.* *to make as few Things neceſſary to our Happineſs as we can.*

Further, as the Things we want are not neceſſary, ſo they are not certain; conſequently, we ſhould not count upon them ſo confidently as to be uneaſy without them. There are ſome Things God has promiſed, and we ſhall never be denied, as thoſe ſpiritual Bleſſings that concern our Happineſs: But Riches, Honours, Health, worldly Enjoyments, he has not abſolutely promiſed. Indeed if we *ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, theſe Things ſhall be added*, i. e. ſo far as is proper for us, but we have no Aſſurance of them; he may with-hold or give them, as the Ends of his Government and our Safety and Intereſt require. And hence another Maxim of Wiſdom ariſes of the higheſt Importance to us; *Never to ſet our Affections on any Thing intenſly, that we may not obtain, or may loſe; for that expoſes us to perpetual Diſappointments, with all the Torment that is conſequent thereupon.*

I might ſubjoin, that none of theſe Things, the want of which we ſo much reſent, can in themſelves ſatisfy us. After what we deſire is obtained, we find it doth not anſwer Expectation: And it is ten to one a freſh Deſire ſtarts up for ſomething elſe, and ſo on to Infinity; till we fix on God, and bound our Deſires with his Will. We are apt to compound in our Imaginations, an Happineſs out of ſuch and ſuch Enjoyments; but it is all Deluſion, and like the Preſcription that one gave his Patient, as a Remedy againſt every Diſeaſe, *viz.* a Doſe of the Grand Elixir in the Yolk of a Phœnix's Egg, *i. e.* ſomething no where to be found.

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Let us therefore underſtand what it is we want, how little it is, how unneceſſary, uncertain and unſatisfying; and then we ſhall not magnify our Evils ſo much as we do. And the like I might ſay of the poſitive Evils we complain of, but I muſt forbear.

3. It would help us to bear our evil Things, did we juſtly eſtimate our good Things. You have received ſome evil Things at the Hand of God: And you have heard upon what Terms, and for what Purpoſes they are diſpenſed. But how many more good Things have you received? Many for one that you have loſt. And beſides theſe good Things that are neceſſary for your Happineſs remain with you untouched. You have the Favour of God, the Promiſes of the Covenant, the Hope of Heaven, and all theſe ſure and ſtedfaſt. And conſequently, all your evil Things compared with theſe are ſo little as ſcarce to be brought to Account. It is a glorious Maxim, in which ſome have found no ſmall ſupport, that *the only poſſible Happineſs is certain.* Let us therefore make a right Judgment both of our evil and good Things; and if we do ſo, we ſhall receive both with an equal Mind.

Upon the whole, as you profeſs to take God for your Lord, your Sovereign and Governor, reſign all into his Hands without making Terms with him; deſire he would do what he knows beſt for you; leave him to do whatever he will, without finding fault. Not but that Evil is Evil, and we may and muſt be ſenſible of it as ſuch; and may, no Queſtion, deſire Deliverance from it, and ſuch Intervals of Peace and Comfort as in our preſent Circumſtances may be wanting: May deſire a Change which we apprehend may be for the better; but this muſt be with great Indiffe-

rence, and a full Reſignation to ſuperior Wiſdom, and to the Will of our great Lord. *Let this Cup paſs*, ſaith our Saviour, *neverthleſs not my Will but thine be done:* This muſt be our Pattern, and we ſhould endeavour, in the Uſe of all proper Means, to bring our Hearts to a correſpondent Temper, and the like Submiſſion; particularly, endeavour it by Prayer, waiting and begging for the divine Spirit to impreſs and form your Hearts hereunto. Obſerve the Workings of your own Minds on all Occaſions, and never ſuffer a rebellious, tumultuous Thought to ariſe uncenſured. This is your Duty, here is your Peace and Happineſs, and the Perfection of it will (in part) be your Heaven.

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1 COR. xiii.

Though I ſpeak with the Tongues of Men, and of Angels; and have not Charity: I am become as ſounding Braſs, or a tinkling Cymbal.

And though I have the Gift of Prophecy, and underſtand all Myſteries, and all Knowledge: And though I have all Faith, ſo that I could remove Mountains; and have no Charity, I am nothing.

And though I beſtow all my Goods to feed the Poor; and though I give my Body to be burned; and have not Charity, it profiteth nothing.

Charity ſuffereth long, and is kind; Charity envieth not; Charity vaunteth not itſelf; is not puffed up;

Doth not behave itſelf unſeemly; ſeeketh not her own; is not eaſily provoked; thinketh no evil:

Rejoiceth not in Iniquity; but rejoiceth in the Truth;

Beareth all Things; believeth all Things; hopeth all Things; endureth all Things.

Charity never faileth: But whether there be Prophecies, they ſhall fail; whether there be

be Tongues they ſhall ceaſe; whether there be Knowledge, it ſhall vaniſh away.

For we know in part, and we propheſy in part.

But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part, ſhall be done away.

When I was a Child, I ſpake as a Child, I underſtood as a Child, I thought as a Child; but when I became a Man, I put away childiſh Things.

For now we ſee through a Glaſs darkly; but then Face to Face: Now I know in part; but then ſhall I know, even as alſo I am known.

And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity; theſe three: but the greateſt of theſe is Charity.

CHAP. I.

I HAVE been endeavouring to explain and enforce the Duties we owe to one another, or to our Neighbour; and to arm you againſt the contrary Vices; ſuch as chiefly affect human Society, and diſturb the Peace and Order of it. And as the Foundation of all our mutual Duties, and the proper Guard of them is *Charity*, 'tis my Purpoſe now to conſider that excellent Grace and Virtue; to explain and recommend Charity to you; Charity to Mankind, to your Brethren, and to one another; to let you ſee how it works, what are its genuine Fruits, and conſequently what are your Attainments with reference to it;

and

and what your Defects. And in order to this I ſhall attend the Apoſtle through this Chapter; where he deſignedly treats on the Subject; diſplays its Nature and Properties, and repreſents the great Value and Importance of it in Religion. I ſhall go through his Diſcourſe upon the Point, and conſider the Deſcription he gives us of it in all the Parts thereof; in a ſort of an Expoſition of the Chapter, without dwelling upon every Verſe and Head of Doctrine that occurs.

For which Purpoſe I muſt obſerve that this *Chapter* ſtands in the Midſt of a large Diſcourſe relating to ſpiritual Gifts. In the foregoing and following Chapters, I mean the 12th and 14th, the Apoſtle admoniſheth the *Corinthians* concerning the Uſe of theſe extraordinary Gifts, which at that time were common among *them*, as well as in other Churches. And between thoſe, the Chapter before us is brought in as a ſort of a Parentheſis; and conſidering the Subject of it, affords us, I think, a Key to them, and may help us to underſtand what the Apoſtle aimed at in them, *viz.* to reprove the *Corinthians* for the Miſmanagement of their Gifts, and particularly for the Want of *Charity* in the Uſe of them. Chap. xii. ver. 8, 9. *To one was given by the Spirit the Word of Wiſdom; to another of Knowledge; to another of Faith, by the ſame Spirit; to another the working of Miracles; to another Prophecy; to another the diſcerning of Spirits; to another divers Kinds of Tongues; to another the Interpretation of Tongues.* But it ſeems theſe Gifts were employed more for Oſtentation than Edification. They did not uſe them with that Harmony, Love, and Charity they ought towards one another; but rather took Occaſion from their ſuppoſed Advantages and Superiority in Gifts, to glory over one another. Nor did they unite their

Abilities

Abilities and Strength to promote the Good of the Community, as became them. There was Pride, Vanity, and Emulation among them. This was the Caſe of many, at leaſt, in that Church; the woeful Infirmity they fell into: To rebuke and cure which, the Apoſtle makes a Digreſſion about Charity.

This appears manifeſtly to have been his Deſign; which methinks is confirmed by the Manner of connecting this Chapter; both with that preceding, and that which follows.

After he had reaſoned with them about the Exerciſe of their Gifts, and allowed them to purſue them as of eminent Uſe in the Church: *Covet earneſtly*, ſays he, *the beſt Gifts*, Chap. xii. ver. 31. he immediately ſubjoins, *yet ſhew I unto you a more excellent way*, i. e. a more excellent Courſe and Method of Life and Behaviour; meaning the way of *Charity*; to the Conſideration of which he directly paſſes. And after he had finiſhed his Diſcourſe on that Head; and when he reſumes the Subject of *ſpiritual Gifts*, in the Beginning of the next Chapter, he carries the Admonition touching *Charity* along with him, and endeavours to keep their Eye to that Point. *Follow after Charity*, ſays he, *and deſire ſpiritual Gifts*, q. d. Whatever Gifts you purſue and exerciſe, take care that *Charity* accompanies them: without that all your ſuppoſed Excellencies are Vanity and Nothing.

Having ſaid thus much to repreſent the general Deſign of the Chapter, in Connexion with the foregoing and following Context: I now proceed to conſider the Chapter itſelf: Wherein we may obſerve,

1. The main Scope of it, which (as has been already hinted) is to deſcribe and praiſe Charity;

rity; to ſhew the *Nature*, the *Neceſſity* and *Excellency* of it.

2. The Arguments by which the Excellency of this noble *Grace* or *Virtue* is manifeſted and proved. And theſe are three;

Firſt, The Inſufficiency and Unprofitableneſs of all other Things; even the moſt pompous Gifts without it, *ver.* 1, 2, 3. *Though I ſpeak with the Tongue of Men,* &c.

Secondly, The genuine and admirable Properties of true Charity: *It ſuffereth long, and is kind; envieth not,* &c. *ver.* 4, 5, 6, 7.

Thirdly, Another Argument to ſhew the Excellency of it, is its Duration. It out-laſts the ſeveral *Gifts* here referred to, and ſeveral of the *Graces.* They ſhall *fail*, but *Charity never faileth.* This you have urged from *ver.* 8. to the end.

Theſe three Particulars comprehend every thing in the Chapter, and ſhall be treated of in their Order.

I. I begin with the firſt, *viz.* the Inſufficiency, and Unprofitableneſs of all other Things; even of the moſt glorious and pompous Gifts without *Charity.* This is aſſerted in the three firſt Verſes. *Though I ſpeak with the Tongues of Men and of Angels, and have not Charity; I am become as ſounding Braſs, or a tinkling Cymbal. And though I have the Gift of Prophecy; and underſtand all Myſteries and all Knowledge; and tho' I have all Faith, ſo that I could remove Mountains, and have no Charity, I am nothing. And tho' I beſtow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and tho' I give my Body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

Where the Thing inſinuated, and which the Apoſtle goes on further to prove and eſtabliſh, is the tranſcendent Value and Excellency of *Charity*; and the Inſufficiency of all thoſe Gifts, the *Corin-*

thians ſo much eſteemed and gloried in, to true Happineſs and Salvation; their Unprofitableneſs without Charity.

And in my enlarging upon this Argument, I ſhall

1. Enquire what is meant by the *Charity*, the Apoſtle ſo much extolls.

2. Take Notice of the ſeveral Particulars here mentioned, which are ſaid to profit nothing without *Charity*: And

3. Shew in what Reſpects they are unprofitable without it.

1. I ſhall enquire what is meant by the *Charity*, ſo much commended and extolled by the Apoſtle here. And I reckon 'tis Charity to Men; or the Love of our Neighbour that is intended; at leaſt chiefly. This may be inferred not only from the Context, but from the Deſcription of it ſubjoined in the following Verſes, where we are told that *it ſuffereth long and is kind, envieth not, is not eaſily provoked, thinketh no Evil, believeth all Things, hopeth all Things*, and the like; which are the Properties of Charity as it reſpects our fellow Creatures.

Some indeed extend it farther, and take in the Love of God. But though that be the Foundation of it; yet it doth not ſeem here deſign'd, or included in the Apoſtle's Notion and Account of it. The Reaſons before ſuggeſted confine it, I think, to the other Senſe, *viz.* to the *Love of our Neighbour*; concerning which let me note a few Things by way of Explication; as

1ſt, That 'tis a *divine Grace*, and hath the Spirit of God for its Author. *The Fruit of the Spirit is Love*, Gal. v. 22. Love to Man, (as it may be underſtood.) There may be, (it's granted) ſomething of Tenderneſs; of Sympathy and Compaſſion toward others, in ſome Men's Natures; a

good

good Degree of Benevolence; though they are Strangers to the ſanctifying Impreſſions of God's Spirit.

But true Charity, that is attended with all its Properties, and produces the genuine Fruits of ſuch a Grace, claims a higher Original than Nature; even the beſt Nature. Hence that of the Apoſtle, 1 Theſſ. iv. 9. *As touching brotherly Love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye your ſelves are taught of God to love one another.* They were taught, not only by the Word of God, the Rules and Laws of Charity laid down in Scripture; particularly in the Goſpel: but by the Spirit of God; which is as a vital living Principle of divine Love in the Heart.

And this teaching of God, I reckon, eſſential to Chriſtian Charity. *The Spirit that is in us luſteth to envy*, James iv. 5. We are naturally diſpoſed rather to grudge the Happineſs and Comfort of another, than to rejoice in it, and endeavour it. The Apoſtle gives the true Character of Man in his apoſtate State, Tit. iii. 3. *For we our ſelves were ſometimes fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers Luſts and Pleaſures, living in Malice and Envy, hateful and hating one another.* Upon which he adds immediately, *But after the Kindneſs and Love of God appeared, according to his Mercy; he ſaved us by the waſhing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt. He ſaved us* from our Sins, and out of this State of Depravity; particularly from the Enmity, the mutual Enmity, that is too natural to us; *ſaved us by the waſhing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt:* Nor ſhall we be *ſaved* in this Reſpect till ſo *renewed* and *waſhed.*

In a Word, Charity is a divine Grace implanted in the Soul by the Spirit of God: He corrects our Nature; ſheds abroad the Love of our Neighbour

bour in our Hearts; raiſes us above that Selfiſhneſs that contracts our Affections, and all our Concern and Care, within the narrow Sphere of our own Intereſts; and makes us *look, not every one at* our *own Things, but at the Things that are another's*, Phil. ii. 4.

2dly, Charity eſſentially lies in wiſhing well to others; in deſiring their welfare; which will be attended with Acts of Kindneſs towards them, ſo far as is in our Power. The former is called a Love of Benevolence; the other of Beneficence, which is indeed nothing but the Benevolence expreſſed.

This there always is in Charity. No Man can love another, unleſs he ſincerely deſires his Good and Happineſs; unleſs he is pleaſed with it, and really wiſhes it: And if his Love be ſincere, he'll ſeek it and endeavour it what he can. *Let us love*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *not in Word, nor in Tongue; but in Deed and in Truth*, 1 John iii. 8. And what the loving *in Deed, and in Truth*, is, he intimates in the foregoing Verſe, *Whoſo hath this World's Good, and ſeeth his Brother have Need, and ſhutteth up his Bowels of Compaſſion from him; how dwelleth the Love of God in him?* Kind Words and fair Speeches, without inward Good-will and Affection; and this manifeſted in ſuch uſeful Services as we are called to and capable of; are only empty Compliments, a Sham and Counterfeit of Charity, but not the Thing itſelf. Again, I would remark,

3dly, That the Object of Charity is all Mankind. Divine Charity will reach the whole human Species and Race with good Wiſhes, and affectionate Benevolence; though it cannot in one of us limited, narrow Creatures, extend itſelf ſo far, in Inſtances of real Beneficence. Our Sphere

of

of Uſefulneſs indeed is not ſo large: But Charity attends all with Good-will and kind Deſires of their Welfare; and it will go as far as it can to promote it. *As we have Opportunity, let us do Good to all Men*, Gal. vi. 10. Nor ſhould the Conſideration of their Demerit and Unworthineſs, hinder ſuch Acts of Goodneſs towards them as we have Opportunity for, and a Call to. In this Caſe we may ſay as the Philoſopher did, when it was objected to him that he had thrown away his Kindneſs upon an unworthy Object, οὐκ ἀνθρώπῳ ἀλλ' ἀνθρωπίνῳ, we confer the Benefit not ſo much on the Individual as the Species; not on the ill Man, but on the human Nature.

I may add, neither ſhould it be any Obſtruction to our Charity (in proper Expreſſions of it) that the Object is our Enemy. The Authority of our Maſter is expreſs here, and ſhould ſilence all Objections. *I ſay unto you, love your Enemies; bleſs them that curſe you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you*, Matth. v. 44. Charity will *hope* the *beſt* of others, as you will hereafter hear. However, where it finds the *worſt*, it will not (ſo far as it prevails) be wholly diſcouraged. We are to be *perfect, as our Father in Heaven is perfect*; to love as God loveth; *who maketh his Sun to riſe on the Evil, and on the Good; and ſendeth Rain on the Juſt, and on the Unjuſt.* But notwithſtanding,

4. Our Charity may, and ſhould be exerciſed with ſomething of Diſtinction: With a Preference of ſome to others, *i. e.* of the Good, the Pious, the Members of Chriſt, and the Church; a Preference of them to common Men, and wicked Men. This the Apoſtle *eſpecially* doth not only warrant, but teach; Gal. vi. 10. *Let us do Good*

unto all Men, eſpecially unto them who are of the Houſhold of Faith. And indeed, whilſt we reſerve a higher Degree, and peculiar Inſtances of Love, to the moſt worthy Objects; the Children, and Servants of God; the excellent of the Earth, we do but imitate our heavenly Father; who, though his tender Mercies are over all, yet more peculiarly *loveth the Righteous, and his Countenance* in a more gracious manner *beholdeth the Upright.*

In ſhort, we are to *honour all Men;* maintain Benevolence univerſally to them; but we may, and ſhould, eſpecially *love the Brotherhood*; conſider them as the Objects of our greateſt Complacency, Delight, and Kindneſs. Let me obſerve further,

5. Our Charity to others ſhould be meaſured and regulated by our Charity and Love to our ſelves. This Chriſt requires of us, and makes it one of the great Commands; Matth. xxii. 39. *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.* And was this one Law of Charity introduced into our Minds, and eſtabliſhed there; there would need little further Diſcourſe about it. I might then ſay, (as the Apoſtle to the *Theſſalonians*, in the Text before quoted) *concerning Brotherly Love you need not that I ſhould* ſpeak *to you; for ye yourſelves are taught of God*, and taught from your ſelves *to love one another.*

Every Man loves himſelf; and he doth it truly and ſincerely. His Love to himſelf is not feigned. 'Tis hearty, conſtant, vigorous, and ſtrong. It has, for the Foundation and Source of it, a great deal of Benevolence and Good-will; and this iſſues forth in Practice, and puts upon ſuitable Services. Now of this Sort ſhould our Charity to others be. And let me add, there can be no ſuch Thing as Charity (the *Charity* celebrated in this

Chapter) till inordinate Self-love is ſuppreſſed. It's here mentioned as one of its Properties, that *ſhe ſeeketh not her own*, ver. 5. *i. e.* to the Prejudice or Neglect of the Intereſts of another. Whilſt Selfiſhneſs prevails; a lawleſs unbounded Selfiſhneſs, and we are attach'd to our own Intereſts, Humours, and Qualifications, and never look out beyond our own Concerns, or thoſe of our Family which are conſidered as part of our own; we know nothing of divine Charity. That's a generous Grace; often changes Perſons with our Neighbour; puts our ſelves in his ſtead, and treats him in every Reſpect as we would be treated. Once more,

6. True Charity may be known by the genuine Properties which always attend and accompany it. Several of them we have ſpecified in this Chapter; which I ſhall particularly explain hereafter. *It ſuffereth long; is kind; it envieth not; vaunteth not itſelf; is not puffed up; behaveth not itſelf unſeemly; ſeeketh not her own; is not eaſily provoked; thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth; beareth all Things; believeth all Things; hopeth all Things; endureth all Things.*

This is *Charity*; all this belongs to the Nature of it. And if we are deſtitute of ſuch a Charity, the Apoſtle hath read our Sentence; and pronounced that we are as ſounding Braſs, or a tinkling Cymbal; and that whatever Excellencies we pretend to, we are nothing; and they ſhall profit us nothing. Which brings me to the next general Head propoſed, *viz.*

II. To take Notice of the ſeveral Particulars here mentioned; which are ſaid to profit nothing without Charity. I ſhall not run out into a long Diſcourſe, but very briefly touch upon each Head. And

The Gift of Tongues, even in the higheſt Perfection, is of this Number. Tho', ſaith the Apoſtle, *I could ſpeak with the Tongues of Men and of Angels*, i. e. Though I underſtood all the Languages uſed among Mankind, and were fit to converſe with the Angels themſelves, and could ſpeak in their Dialect; yet if I wanted Charity, it would avail me nothing: I ſhould only be *as ſounding Braſs, or a tinkling Cymbal.*

The ſame is ſaid of the Gift of *Prophecy*; the *underſtanding* all *Myſteries* and *Knowledge*. By the Gift of *Prophecy* may be meant an Ability to expound the Scriptures, (particularly the Old Teſtament Scriptures) or an Ability to foretell future Events. And by underſtanding all Myſteries and Knowledge, may be intended an extraordinary Inſight into the more difficult Paſſages of Revelation, *q. d.* Tho' I could ſpeak by ſpecial Inſpiration of the Spirit; and, under his Influence, expound with infallible Clearneſs all prophetical Scriptures, and dark Parables: Though I could ſolve all the hard Queſtions relating to the Word, or Works of God; yet had I not Charity, all my Knowledge and Attainments would be vain.

The *Faith* of *Miracles* is next mentioned. *Tho' I had all Faith, ſo that I could remove Mountains*, i. e. ſuch Faith as extended to all kinds of Miracles, and was ſufficient for them; even the moſt hard and difficult, the removing Mountains; this would not avail me without Charity: Notwithſtanding if I have not *this, I am nothing*. Another Inſtance is,

Extraordinary Liberality to the Poor; to which the Apoſtle ſubjoins ſuffering Martyrdom in Conſideration of the Truth. Now (ſaith the Apoſtle) though I was diſtinguiſhed with all theſe admirable

admirable and uncommon Gifts and Powers; yet if I wanted Charity, I ſhould be nothing.

No doubt the Apoſtle refers to the Gifts, for which the Church of *Corinth* was ſo famous; and which they ſo much gloried in. And at the ſame time he intends a Reproof to them, as overlooking Charity in the Exerciſe thereof.

And ſome have obſerved, that the Apoſtle in theſe Verſes reckons up ſuch Things as were in greateſt Repute among the *Jews*; and which rendered their wiſe Men moſt celebrated. Thus, they ſay of one of their Rabbies; that he underſtood *the Language of Angels:* of another; that there was not a *Rooter up of Mountains*, like him; or one that could do ſo great Things. With Regard to Alms they ſay, *whoſoever diminiſheth any thing of his Subſtance for Relief of the Poor, ſhall be delivered from Hell.* And for Martyrdom for the Law: They thought it ſufficient to expiate, not only for their own Sins; but for the Sins of the whole Nation. Whether the *Corinthians* had got any of theſe Notions I cannot determine: but 'tis very probable they ſet too high a Value upon their Gifts; whilſt Pride, Vanity, Uncharitableneſs, attended the Exerciſe of them: And therefore the Apoſtle ſets himſelf here to correct them; declaring all to be worthleſs and nothing. Dr. *Whitby.*

He that ſpake with Tongues, even the Tongues of Men and Angels, had the moſt glorious Gift of that kind: yet, if void of Charity, was but as ſounding Braſs, or a tinkling Cymbal. Such a Perſon, notwithſtanding his Attainment, was no more in God's Account than the ſounding a muſical Inſtrument; and, it may be, he would by this Expreſſion inſinuate their vain Glory in the Uſe of their Gift; and that their ſpeaking with

Tongues was like ſounding a Trumpet, in Triumph, and for Oſtentation. This leads me,

III. To hint in what Reſpect theſe Things are unprofitable without Charity. I ſhall touch this Head very briefly: and therefore only obſerve in general; that they are ſo as to Acceptance with God, and a Perſon's future Welfare. What the Apoſtle ſuppoſes and aſſerts, is; that a Man might have any of theſe Gifts, and perform any of theſe extraordinary Things; might have the Gift of Tongues, (in this excellent Degree;) might have the Gift of Prophecy, and underſtand all Myſteries and Knowledge; not only be bountiful to the Poor, but be a Martyr for Religion; and yet at laſt periſh: He might, notwithſtanding all this, be no true Chriſtian. An aweful and ſolemn Conſideration!

Upon which Occaſion, I beg leave to ſuggeſt a few practical Reflections, before I paſs on to another Part of the Subject before me, though I ſhall not enlarge upon them.

1. If theſe high and eminent Gifts may leave a Man miſerable; if he be nothing notwithſtanding all of them, how much more may this be ſaid of the little low Things of the World? ſuch as Riches, Honours, Titles, and the like; which are of a much meaner Nature and far leſs Account, than the Gifts the Apoſtle ſpeaks of? Certainly if *the one* profit nothing, without ſomething greater and better, the other will profit nothing. They will avail nothing at laſt, whatever they do now.

2. Here is Matter of Encouragement to all ſincere Chriſtians, whatever their Circumſtances may be in the World. You have ſomething that will profit you, when all worldly Advantages will come to nothing. You may perhaps want the Honour, Wealth, and Power; the Learning and

Gifts

Gifts of ſome others: But you have what is much more excellent than all theſe Things, conſidered in themſelves; more acceptable to God, and that will turn to a better Account in the End. We may remark again,

3. That Perſons may make a glorious, ſplendid Profeſſion of Religion; and diſtinguiſh themſelves by ſome Acts of Zeal in the Service of it; and yet be but Hypocrites. This you ſee is the Caſe here ſuppoſed by the Apoſtle; *though I ſpeak*, &c. and ſays Chriſt himſelf, *Many ſhall ſay unto me, in that Day have we not propheſied in thy Name, and in thy Name caſt out Devils, and done many wonderful Works?* To whom he replies; *I never knew you: depart from me ye that work Iniquity*, Matth. vii. 22, 23.

Perſons may excell in Gifts; bear Offices in the Church; may talk in high Strains of Devotion; may diſpute or write with great Learning and Zeal, in behalf of Religion; may diſtribute liberally to the Poor; build Hoſpitals; aud even die for the Truth, and yet be nothing: All this may profit nothing. They may act herein from low, baſe, ſelfiſh Principles; as to raiſe themſelves a Monument among Men: They may do theſe Things to be ſeen, and applauded of others; and then our Lord tells us, *they have their Reward*; have it at preſent, and ſhall have no Reward from his *heavenly Father*. Therefore,

4. We may infer hence, of how great Importance Charity is in Religion. Without it the higheſt Gifts, all imaginable Excellencies, are nothing. They may make a fine Shew, or a loud Noiſe; may draw the Attention, and excite the Admiration and Praiſe of Men; but they are but like *ſounding Braſs, or a tinkling Cymbal:* They do not affect a Man's preſent, real State; nor ſecure

his future happy State. Without Charity they are nothing: of ſo much Account is that in the Chriſtian Scheme. And our Lord imitates the ſame thing, when he tells us; that *to love the Lord our God with all our Heart, Soul, and Mind; is the firſt and great Commandment: And* that *the Second is like unto it*, viz. *to love our Neighbour as our ſelves*, Matth. xxii. 37, 38. So that if a Man be defective here, he wants one half of Religion; and the Defect being in a fundamental, he is nothing; his Religion ſhall profit him nothing. Hereupon,

5. We may learn from what has been ſaid, how neceſſary it is to act upon right Principles, in Matters of Religion. The Apoſtle plainly ſuppoſes a Man may *give all his Goods to feed the Poor*, and yet want *Charity*. The Reaſon is, he may act herein from wrong Principles and Views; from Pride, Vanity, *&c.* So he may *give his Body to be burnt*, as a Martyr for Religion, and yet have no true Religion.

And who will queſtion whether a Perſon may not hear, pray, communicate at the Lord's Table, and go through all the Parts of outward Devotion, and make a Shew of extraordinary Zeal therein; and after all be nothing? nothing in God's Account; have nothing of the Heart and Spirit of a Chriſtian? O let us take Care to act with upright and pure Intentions in theſe Affairs; remembring that God *loveth Truth in the inward Parts*. And *whatſoever we do*, (as the Apoſtle exhorts) *let us do it heartily; as unto the Lord, and not unto Men: Knowing that of the Lord we ſhall receive the Reward of the Inheritance*, Col. iii. 23, 24. Eſpecially let us look to it; that Charity attends all our religious Exerciſes.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

I Now proceed to conſider;

II. The genuine, and admirable Properties of true Chriſtian Charity: which we have enumerated and ſet down in Verſes 4, 5, 6, 7. *It ſuffereth long, and is kind; it envieth not; vaunteth not itſelf; is not puffed up; doth not behave itſelf unſeemly; ſeeketh not her own; is not eaſily provoked; thinketh no Evil; rejoiceth not in Iniquity; but rejoiceth in the Truth; beareth all Things; believeth all Things; hopeth all Things.*

As I intend only a ſhort and general Account of the Subject, I ſhall not inſiſt largely upon each Head, but ſhall (1.) explain the ſeveral Particulars; and then (2.) make ſome Remarks upon the entire Deſcription.

1. I ſhall explain the ſeveral Particulars, or the Properties of the Grace of Charity, as they occur in the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe.

In order to which let me premiſe; that the Apoſtle ſpeaks here of Charity figuratively; as of a Perſon. Thus, when he ſaith Charity doth ſo and ſo; that it is *Long-ſuffering*, &c. The Meaning is, that the charitable Perſon doth it: Every one that acteth according to the Rules and Laws of Charity, acteth thus.

And farther I would obſerve, that it is not eaſy to fix the preciſe, determinate Ideas of theſe ſeveral Attributes and Properties of Charity; ſo as to preſerve a Diſtinction between them. Some of them ſeem to coincide, and fall in one with another: And though there is no doubt a Difference; for the Apoſtle did not tautologize; intend the ſame

ſame thing, only varying the Expreſſion; yet that Difference is not always very obvious. I ſhall however offer you my Conjecture; and that's all I pretend to, without troubling you with a great deal of Criticiſm.

Having hinted thus much, I go on to explain the Apoſtle's Deſcription of Charity, in the ſeveral Properties of it. And,

1ſt, *It ſuffereth long*, μακροθυμεῖ; 'tis forbearing, and patient. Two or three Things are here implied and included. As,

That our Neighbour, or Brother, the Object of our Charity, has rendered himſelf obnoxious; is in ſome Reſpect or other an Offender; expoſed to our Reſentment and Cenſure. Had we naught againſt him, there would be no Occaſion for Long-ſuffering and Forbearance. Long-ſuffering plainly ſuppoſes that there has been, and is Matter of Diſguſt. And it ſeems to intimate that this Offence (whatever it is) is of ſome ſtanding: Hence Charity is repreſented not only as ſuffering, but ſuffering long. In ſhort, Charity as 'tis Long-ſuffering reſpects an Offender, and a continued Offender. And

The Long-ſuffering of Charity implies; that it doth not make haſte to puniſh; it doth not immediately take Vengeance. Charity, though it ſee many Things amiſs in our Neighbour; doth not forthwith proceed to Sentence and Execution. It deferreth Anger and Judgment. And then

It doth not preſently reprobate the Perſon; doth not immediately caſt him off and abandon him, as worthleſs, hopeleſs, and loſt. What is ſaid of God, may be alſo ſaid of Charity, (herein like God;) that 'tis gracious, merciful, and ſlow to Anger, *Joel* ii. 13.

Two

Two Things I'll remark upon this Property of Charity;

Firſt, That whereas it is ſaid, *viz.* that Charity *is not eaſily provoked*, and here that it is Long-ſuffering, the critical and nice Difference between theſe two Properties ſeems to be, that the one refers to the curbing of a ſudden Paſſion, (in a violent Motion of it;) the reſtraining of raſh Anger: And the other, (this under Conſideration) to the repreſſing of Revenge, and the Deſire of it. We are to be *ſlow to Wrath*, James i. 19. *Patient*, 2 Tim. ii. 24. ἀνεξίκακον, *bearing Evil*, as the Word ſignifies. When a Perſon beholds Evil in another, or receives Evil from others; and is yet calm and compoſed; his Mind not ruffled in a diſorderly Manner: He is then not eaſily provoked. And when he can bear the Evil (of whatever kind) without executing ſuch Puniſhment as is in his Power: He is then Long-ſuffering.

2dly, Let me again remark, how much they offend againſt this Rule and Law of Charity, that upon every little Diſguſt from their Brother, forthwith reject, and caſt him off. Charity, it may be, can find an Excuſe for the Fault; or, if it be utterly without Apology, Long-ſuffering will wait for the Amendment of the Offender.

This doth God. He doth not ſpeedily execute Sentence againſt an evil Work, but waits to be gracious. And thus doth Charity; ſo far as it obtains with us and governs our Minds. It doth not make a Man an Offender for a Word; at leaſt, it doth not make him vile and reprobate, and withdraw all friendly Intercourſe from him, and friendly Offices for him, upon every ſmall Offence. No, it is Long-ſuffering. Study this Property of Charity, and beg that God would grant you more of it. But I go on,

Secondly,

Secondly, Charity *is kind.* This is another Character of it, χρηστευεται, it acts a good and kind Part.

It is kind in its Sentiments and Opinion of others. It doth not overlook what is good and valuable in them. If they be bad Men, Charity can ſtill find a great many Things in them that deſerve a kind of Love; as that they are Men, God's Creatures, reaſonable Creatures; that they are God's Image, (his natural Image;) have rational and immortal Spirits, capable of all the Endowments of Grace, and of all the Happineſs of a future Heaven. Now as theſe are great and eminent Privileges; ſo they will afford Charity Arguments againſt utter Contempt. Not to ſay that bad Men may have ſome amiable Qualifications of a moral Nature; as Honeſty and Truth, Courteſy, Compaſſion, Tenderneſs, and the like. Chriſt beheld the young Man in the Goſpel and loved him, *Mark* x. 21. Though it appears from what follows, he had not at preſent an Heart to comply with the Terms of Salvation. *Charity is kind:* It has Goodneſs in its Nature, and ſhews it as much in its Conſtruction of Perſons and Things, as any other way. If it cannot avoid ſeeing Evil in others, it will with more Pleaſure contemplate their Good; and will be ſure to bring that into the Account, when it is making an Eſtimation of them, And as to good Men: Charity is always kind in weighing them in its Ballance. If they have many and great Failings; it will have its Mantle of Love, ready to caſt over them: And whilſt their Excellencies appear to predominate and exceed; it chiefly attends to theſe. Something of this may probably be hinted to us in the proceeding of the divine Goodneſs, (the great Example of our Charity:) Whilſt it pronounces this

and

and the other Man (as *Noah*, *Aſa*, *Job*, and others) perfect. They were upright, ſincere, and good Men; and the divine Grace and Goodneſs overlooked the reſt. And this Kindneſs there is in Charity.

As Charity is kind in its Judgment, ſo in its Deſires concerning others: 'Tis full of Benevolence: If they be not good and happy, it wiſhes them ſo, more ſo, perfectly ſo. And here it is God-like, extending to all Mankind. *He deſires not the Death of the Wicked*, &c. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. *is not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance*, 2 Pet. iii. 9. And the like Affection there is in divine Charity: A glorious Inſtance of which we have in the Apoſtle *Paul*, Rom. ix. 3. *I could wiſh my ſelf accurſed from Chriſt, for my Brethren; my Kinſmen, according to the Fleſh.* So Acts xxvi. 29. *I would to God that, not only thou, but all that hear me this Day, were both almoſt, and altogether ſuch as I am; except theſe Bonds.* As it is ſaid of Charity in that Chapter, *it believeth all Things*, and *hopeth all Things*. So it may be truly ſaid of it, that it wiſheth all Things; all good Things to others. Could it accompliſh its Deſires (in a juſt and reaſonable way) there would not be one miſerable Perſon in the World.

'Tis *kind* in its Behaviour and Manner; accommodating and ſuiting itſelf to others (as far as it can) for their good. There is ſomething of this in its Words, and Language and Mode of Converſe: It ſpeaks kindly and with Complacency, in Oppoſition to Sourneſs and Moroſeneſs. Nor ſhould any think this too mean, and below the Care of a Chriſtian; when the Apoſtle hath made it the Subject of an Exhortation, 1 Pet. iii. 8. *Love as Brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.* And, it may be, this is (at leaſt part of) the Meaning of the Expreſſion,

preſſion, Col. iv. 6. *Let your Speech be always with Grace*; or, as it is elſewhere, ſuch *as may miniſter Grace to the Hearers*, Epheſ. iv. 29. *i. e.* may be received graciouſly, and with Acceptance. Not that we are to flatter Men in their Sins, and ſuit our ſelves to their Vices and Follies: But we ſhould converſe with them in Love and Charity, and ſo as to manifeſt the Kindneſs of this amiable Virtue; recommending to them, in a Sweetneſs of Dialect, the Precepts of Wiſdom; and ourſelves as *their Servants* for that Purpoſe.

And then Charity will in its Kindneſs ſtudy Conformity to others, (ſtill for their Good; and, above all, for their Spiritual Good:) It will, like the Prophet on the dead Child, extend or contract itſelf, with an Eye to their Advantage. *Let every one*, ſays the Apoſtle, *pleaſe his Neighbour, for his Good to Edification*, Rom. xv. 2. And he tells the *Corinthians* that he *pleaſed Men in all Things, not ſeeking his own Profit, but the Profit of many that they might be ſaved*, 1 Cor. x. 33. 'Tis obſerved of Chriſt that he *pleaſed not himſelf*, Rom. xv. 3. He did not always pleaſe himſelf: for Inſtance; when he ſubmitted to the Reproaches, and rough Treatment, he knew he ſhould meet with; and, it may be, when he converſed with Publicans and Sinners, and accepted of their Entertainments, as ſometimes he did, it would have been as grateful to him to have been in the Company of his Diſciples, or in his *Oratory* with his heavenly Father: But the divine Charity, that ruled him, put him upon theſe Condeſcenſions for the good of others.

A ſtiff uncomplying Temper and Carriage, that conſults nothing but our own Humour, Eaſe, or Pleaſure, has nothing of Charity in it; doth not reliſh of the Kindneſs there is in that Virtue.

The

The Kindneſs of Charity appears in its Performances. It thinketh kindly; it wiſheth well, and it doth Good, as it can. Two Things I ſhall take Notice of here; not to run out into all the Fullneſs of ſo large a Subject.

That Charity is compaſſionate, tender, and ſympathizing with others in their Miſeries. As it *rejoiceth with them that rejoice*, ſo it *weepeth with them that weep*. Rom. xii. 15. If it cannot help, it will, at leaſt pity. Thus we often read of Chriſt that he was moved with Compaſſion towards others; from which Principle it was, that he wrought many of his Miracles for their Relief, *Matth.* xiv. 14. *Matth.* xv. 32. When he came to the Grave of *Lazarus*, *he groaned in his Spirit, and was troubled*, John xi. 33. and ver. 35. *he wept*; whence the *Jews* cry out; *behold how he loved him*. The Kindneſs and Goodneſs of Charity will make another's Caſe our own: We ſhall put our ſelves, when that Grace governs us, into their ſtead, and bear a Part of their Burden; *remembring* and conſidering *thoſe in Bonds, as bound with them*, Heb. xiii. 3.

And then further, as it will pity, ſo it will aſſiſt, according to its Capacity. This the Apoſtle calls loving not in *Word* and in *Tongue*, but in *Deed* and in *Truth*, 1 John iii. 8. Thus *Job* ſpeaks for himſelf, when he is pleading his own Cauſe in Defence of his Sincerity againſt the Charge of his Friends: *I delivered*, ſaith he, *the Poor that cried; and the Fatherleſs, and him that had none to help him. The Bleſſing of him that was ready to periſh came upon me; and I cauſed the Widow's Heart to ſing for Joy: I was Eyes to the Blind; and Feet was I to the Lame; I was a Father to the Poor*, &c. Job xxix. 12, 13,—15, *&c.* Charity is kind, χρηστεύεται; it not only wiſhes well and ſpeaks fair, but does Good.

Good. Its Wiſhes indeed exceed its Power; but this muſt be ſaid of it, ſo far as it is right, that its Performances are according to its Power. It doth not put off a *Brother or a Siſter naked and deſtitute*, with a *depart in Peace*, and *be ye cloathed* or *filled*; but gives the Things they want. Nor doth it only relieve the Poor, but exerts itſelf in ſuitable Services towards all others. It counſels the Weak, comforts the Dejected, and Mourners, ſeeks to reclaim Sinners, ſets itſelf to encourage Friends, and do all the Service it can to the Community; and that out of Zeal for the Honour of God, and Affection to Mankind. This there is in Charity, according to that Deſcription of it, imply'd in the Character the Philoſopher gives of a good Man, (ἀνὴρ χρήσος) that it is a common Good. O that we had more of this Charity! It would make us God-like, and give us a Pleaſure and Satisfaction in our Minds, that nothing in the World can come up to.

It follows, as another Branch of the Deſcription;

3dly, That *Charity envieth not*. And this may eaſily be inferred from what has been ſaid. For if it hath ſo much Kindneſs and Goodneſs in it; 'tis certain it will not grudge the Happineſs of another, nor look pale at another's Proſperity.

To diſpatch this Head in a few Words, let me only obſerve two or three Things.

Charity is not diſturbed at any of the Advantages of our Neighbour; as Riches, Honours, Wiſdom, Learning, Reputation, Succeſs, either in the Affairs of this World or of another. Not but that good Men (who have ſome Charity) may feel the working of this Paſſion as well as others; but that argues their Imperfection, and the Defect of their Charity: As perfect Love caſts

out

out Fear, ſo perfect Charity would exclude all Envy.

And further let me remark, (as the Reaſon of this) that true Charity, or the Love of others is meaſured by Self-Love. This is our Rule, that we *love our Neighbour as our ſelves.* Now no Man envies himſelf, or thinks much of any of his Enjoyments: though the humble Man may think, and doth think himſelf unworthy of them. And if we change Perſons with our Neighbour, place our ſelves in his ſtead, and him in our ſtead; we ſhould no more repine at his Comfort than at our own.

And indeed Envy is ſo abſurd and vile a Paſſion, that one cannot ſuppoſe ſo excellent a Grace as Charity has any Commerce with it: It ſeems to be the peculiar Sin of the Devil: He envies our Happineſs, and therefore endeavours to undermine and ruin it: Hence his firſt Attempts, and hence all his Plots and Devices againſt us. He cannot bear to ſee us poſſeſs a Happineſs he has for ever loſt; and, for that Reaſon ſets himſelf to oppoſe it; going about (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *like a roaring Lion, ſeeking whom he may devour.* To envy another, is to act like the Devil; and this can never agree to Charity, which is a Ray of Divinity, (as I may call it) a ſpecial Reſemblance of the divine Nature.

'Tis alſo ſaid,

4thly, That *Charity vaunteth not itſelf.* The Word here uſed, περπερεύεσθαι, is of doubtful Senſe, and of doubtful Original. The Criticks take Notice that it is not found among the ancient *Grecians*; and many of them apprehend it derived from the *Latin*, *(Perperam agere.)* However, it ſeems to import acting amiſs: And our Tranſlation underſtands it of a vain, haughty Manner

of acting; acting amiss, out of Pride and Vanity, *It vaunteth not itself.* It may be the Meaning is, that it doth not glory in its Atchievements; like *Jehu, Come and see my Zeal,* &c. 2 Kings x. 6. or like *Nebuchadnezzer,* Dan. iv. 30. *Is not this great Babylon that I have built,* &c. And perhaps it includes Presumption and Rashness in Undertakings; from Pride, and an Opinion of Self-sufficiency: And then it imports the very Reverse of the Psalmist's Temper, Psalm cxxxi. 1. *My Heart is not haughty, nor are mine Eyes lofty; neither do I exercise my self in great Matters, or in Things too high for me.* This Sense the Criticks think they find in the Word.

And as this is a Property of that Charity which concerns others; we must not leave out our Neighbour here; but must suppose this Vaunting some way or other, refers to him. 'Tis probable therefore the Meaning is that it doth not vaunt itself, and arrogate to itself, to the lessening of another. Charity will not lift up itself, and depress others; sink their Reputation, that it may advance its own. 'Tis added as much of the same Import,

5thly, That *it is not puffed up.* It doth not give way to Elation, Pride, and Greatness of Mind; doth not value itself unduly upon any of its Performances; and (which must be included) doth not despise others. If Charity does any thing for the Good of others, or for the Service of Mankind; it doth not assume the Praise to itself, but is ready modestly to say with the Apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 10. *Not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.*

Much less doth it vauntingly glory over those it pretends to serve.

6htly

6thly, It *doth not behave itſelf unſeemly.* There are many Ways of doing this: But the Scope of the Apoſtle (deſcribing Charity in its Intercourſe with others) makes it neceſſary to attend to that in the Interpretation. And it may be it refers to our Treatment of them in our Converſe with them. It doth not behave itſelf unſeemly or unbecomingly towards them: As by aſſuming an undue Superiority over them; by inſulting their Infirmities; triumphing over their Weakneſſes; neglecting, deſpiſing them, *&c.* Charity ſweetens the Temper; teaches us to put our ſelves in their Room, to deal with them as we would be dealt by, and to ſhew all Meekneſs and Humility in our Converſation. A ſevere, rough, boiſterous Carriage only tends to grieve and diſoblige thoſe we converſe with, and can have nothing of this amiable Virtue of Charity in it.

Or it may be it refers to an unſeemly manner of conferring Benefits: As when we take too much Notice of our Bounty; are ready to twit and upbraid others therewith. This *Seneca*, I remember, cenſures as a great Indecency, and what very much leſſens the Value of a Favour.

But (after all) if this and the other two Particulars be thought leſs agreeable to the common Offices of Charity, we may underſtand the Apoſtle as referring to the Exerciſe of ſpiritual Gifts; and then theſe Properties of Charity that it *vaunteth not itſelf, is not puffed up*; *behaveth not itſelf unſeemly*; are exceeding pertinent to his Purpoſe; which was to reprove the Pride and unbecoming Behaviour of the *Corinthians* in the Uſe of them.

7thly, Another Property of Charity is, that it *ſeeketh not her own.* That is;

It ſeeketh not its own to the Prejudice of another. That Seliſiſhneſs which carries Men to injure and wrong their Neighbour, is inconſiſtent with Charity. And yet how common a Caſe is this: For Men to conſider no Intereſt but their own, and to purſue that through any Meaſures, how mean ſoever, or however hurtful to others.

It ſeeketh not its own in Neglect of the Intereſt of others. *Look not every Man,* ſaith the Apoſtle, *on his own Things, but alſo on the Things of others,* Phil. ii. 4. μὴ σκοπεῖτε, don't make your own Things your Aim and Scope; what your Eye is kept upon, and which it's never drawn from. Charity doth not confine its Care, Study and Endeavour to itſelf; to its own Affairs, Family, Relations: but looks to others; to the Neighbourhood, to the Community, to the Church, and has a true Concern to the Welfare thereof; according to that of the Apoſtle, *I ſeek not mine own Profit, but the Profit of many,* 1 Cor. x. 33. How few are there that can ſay this? How many at leaſt are there that cannot ſay it? that they ſeek not their own Profit, but the Profit of others, *i. e.* not *only* their own Profit; that Self, their own Things, Intereſts, and thoſe of their Relations, are not only more than all others to them, but in Effect all the World to them.

It ſeeketh not its own, *i e.* It denieth and quits its own Intereſt on many Occaſions. It overlooks its own Things that it may promote the Things of others. For Inſtance it denies its own Profit; ſo the Apoſtle did, as you ſee in that juſt mentioned, 1 *Cor.* x. 33. *I ſeek not mine own Profit, but* &c. It denies its own Liberty: *Though I am free from all Men,* ſays the Apoſtle, *yet have I made myſelf Servant to all, that I might gain the more,* 1 Cor. ix. 19. And 1 Cor. viii. 13.

13. *Wherefore if Meat make my Brother to offend, I will eat no Fleſh while the World ſtandeth, leſt I make my Brother to offend.* Charity is not ſtiff and humourſome, but conducts itſelf by generous Principles; conſiders not what is barely lawful, but what is expedient, and what will moſt tend to the Edification of others. And, Oh! had there been more of this Charity in the World, Things had been at a much better paſs among Mankind. Again,

Charity will deny its own Eaſe, of which the Apoſtle was an eminent Example; *whereunto*, ſays he, *I alſo labour, ſtriving* ἀγωνιζόμενος, exerting himſelf with great Vigour, *Coloſ* i. 29. And what it was he laboured for, he tells you in the preceding Verſe, *that he might preſent every Man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus.* Had we this divine Charity, all our Thoughts and Care would not be about our own Affairs, our Trades, our Families, the raiſing them in the World, about Wealth, Honour, Health and other low Things: But how we might do Good to others, eſpecially to their Souls. O that there were ſuch an Heart in us! We ſhould then ſee a new State of Things within our own Minds, and among our Brethren. Farther,

It denies its own Humour and Gratification in a great many Reſpects. That this is a Duty the Apoſtle declares, *Rom.* xv. 1. *We that are ſtrong ought to bear the Infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe ourſelves.* There muſt be an Accommodation, a Stooping, and a Compliance, even when we are ſure we ourſelves are right: We muſt bear the Infirmities of the Weak.

To conclude, the Apoſtle carries this Inſtance of Charity even to denying Life itſelf; the ſacrificing that for the Good of others. *If I be*

offered up, ſays he, *upon the Sacrifice and Service of your Faith I joy and rejoyce with you all*, Phil. ii. 17. and 1 John iii. 16. It is made a general Duty: *Hereby we perceive the Love of God, becauſe he laid down his Life for us, and we ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren.*

Thus Charity ſeeketh not her own; and may I not remark from what has been ſaid, how defective we are in this Grace. How do we ſeek our own? Where are thoſe generous divine Souls to be found that live for God and the Good of others? That ſeek not their own Things to the Prejudice of their Neighbour, or in neglect of his Intereſt; but are ready to part with any Advantages for the Service of Chriſt and his Church. O bewail the manifeſt defect, and beg of God for more of this Chriſtian Temper!

8. Charity *is not eaſily provoked.* Criticks obſerve that the Word παροξύνεσθαι ſignifies the height of Anger, a Paroxyſm, or ſharp and violent Fit thereof. It ſeems to denote what we call Paſſion. Now among the many excellent Properties of Charity, reckoned up by the Apoſtle, this is one, that it doth not run out into Exceſſes of Anger. It doth not allow it ſuddenly to kindle; however not to break out into a Flame, it is not eaſily provoked; but when Occaſion of Provocation is offered it will moderate the Reſentment, and keep the Mind calm and compoſed.

If it be asked, how Charity doth this? I anſwer, it ſweetens the Temper: It is a good natured Grace, eaſy and kind, excludes all boiſterous Paſſions, and conſequently is a Guard againſt the tranſports of Anger. *The Fruit of the Spirit*, ſays the Apoſtle, *is love*, it follows, *Joy*, *Peace*, *Long-ſuffering*, *Gentleneſs*, *Goodneſs*, Gal. v. 22. Where there is Charity and Love, where theſe reign in the

the Heart, there will be a great deal of Peace and Gentleneſs. And then further,

Charity ſuppreſſes Paſſion by a candid Interpretation of thoſe Actions of our Neighbour that are the Matter of Provocation. Fury and Rage will not kindle in the Breaſt of a charitable Man; ſo ſoon as in another's. The reaſon is, he has a more favourable Conſtruction and Gloſs to put upon what is ſaid or done that tends to provoke. In the firſt Place Charity will deliberate and weigh the Matter, will not off-hand riſe up to the utmoſt Reſentment: And therefore it is ſaid in the Text, according to our Tranſlation, it is not eaſily provoked. It will conſider whether there is cauſe to be angry, and how far Anger is due. And then it is ten to one, whilſt the Perſon is deliberating, Charity will ſtep in with its Pleas in Favour of the Offender. It may be, ſays Charity, there was no ill Intention, however the Thing appears: He may not himſelf be ſenſible this is Wrong or a Fault. He may not often be guilty of it, may at preſent be under peculiar and uncommon Temptations, *&c.* Or if no ſufficient Excuſe offer, Charity goes another way to work. It pities the Offender, turns Paſſion into Compaſſion, bewails the Infirmity of its Neighbour and Friend, and drops a Tear over his Weakneſs. All which, it is evident, tend to keep the Mind from the Paroxyſm mentioned in the Text, the ſudden and violent out-breaking of Anger: Or to lay it when it begins to ſtir.

And let me obſerve, by the by, how much it is our Intereſt to cheriſh this Grace. It is not only a Friend to Society, but to every Mind in which it rules: Hinders Tumults without, and Tumults within; keeps a Man from diſturbing others, and keeps all Things in Peace in his own

Breaſt, even in the Midſt of Provocations. In ſhort the more Benignity, Love and Charity there is in our Hearts, the leſs we ſhall ſuffer by other People's Paſſions, or by our own. Let us therefore put on Charity, and preſs forward to higher Meaſures of it; and then Peace, even the *Peace of God* ſhall rule in our Hearts. It is further added concerning Charity,

9. That *it thinketh no Evil*, i. e.

It doth not think nor deviſe Evil to another. It doth not intend him Miſchief, and contrive Miſchief againſt him. So the Original may be underſtood, ὁ λογίζεται τὸ κακὸν. Charity will not lay a Snare for its Neighbour, nor meditate Evil againſt him. Such a Temper is contrary to the whole Genius of Charity, and to all the Properties of it: And is downright Malice and Hatred, the very Reverſe of Charity.

It is the Character of the Wicked, *the Words of his Mouth are Iniquity and Deceit, and* that *he deviſeth Miſchief on his Bed*, Pſal. xxxvi. 3, 4. He ſecretly contrives Harm or Miſchief to his Neighbour; ſometimes how to circumvent him in his Buſineſs; ſometimes how to undermine his Reputation, and blaſt his good Name; and either the one or the other according as the Paſſion, whether Covetouſneſs or Envy, is predominant. But every Thing of this kind is foreign and contrary to the Nature of Charity. It is never buſy in Machinations and Contrivances againſt another; but as it is full of Benevolence and Goodwill, its Contrivances are not to harm but help its Neighbour. For

It thinketh no Evil, *i. e.* it doth not imagine nor ſuſpect Evil in another unneceſſarily, nor indeed without irreſiſtible Evidence. It is not guilty of Evil-ſurmiſing: One Reaſon of which may

may be the Innocence of the charitable Perſon. An uncharitable Perſon is often accompanied with a bad Conſcience. Where Perſons know a great deal of Evil concerning themſelves they are apt to ſuſpect the ſame in others. Such as are conſcious to themſelves that ſelf or ſelfiſh Intereſt governs them in all they do, are ready to meaſure others by themſelves. But the charitable and good Man, as he has a better Conſcience of his own, ſo he is more kind in his Opinion, with reference to other Men; and therefore is not apt to think Evil; to imagine the worſt of them. No, Charity believeth all Things, *i. e.* as far as it can. Once more;

Charity thinketh no Evil, *i. e.* it doth not impute Evil to another, without ſufficient Grounds; and charge it upon him. And this perhaps is the direct meaning of the Apoſtle; and a moſt eminent glorious Inſtance it is of the Excellence of Charity. Envy and Ill-will is backward to own the Good there is in others, and in what they do: won't impute their Good to them; but loves to detract; loves to leſſen their Merit: and if it praiſe it muſt be with a *but*; ſome Terms of Abatement and Diminution, attempting thereby to ſully a Character it cannot utterly deny: And in the mean Time is quick in ſpying Faults; ready and free in charging them, even with Aggravations. This is the Property of Envy and Uncharitableneſs. On the other Hand, Charity conducts itſelf by a different Rule, thinketh no Evil, οὐ λογίζεται it doth not impute Evil to a Perſon. If he do a good Thing, Charity will enlarge on that; take Pleaſure in telling it: But what is Evil, as it will not unwarrantably ſuſpect it, ſo it will not unneceſſarily impute it. In a Word, it has a Trumpet to ſound the Praiſe of its Neighbour's good Things, and a Veil to throw over his evil Things.

But

But you will ſay, do all charitable and good Men act according to theſe Meaſures? I anſwer, ſo far as they are good and charitable, they do. It is the Property of Charity to act thus. And you will obſerve that the Apoſtle does not ſay that every charitable Man, *i. e.* every one that hath any Charity does ſo and ſo, but that Charity doth it. Had Charity its perfect Work; was it ſuffered to have its full Scope, and to bear Sway in us without any Check; this would be the effect of it. It would be far more diſpoſed to think well of another, than bad of him; nor would it pronounce Evil concerning him, but upon Conſtraint. But as this ſomewhat falls in with the other Property of Charity after mentioned; I ſhall not further inſiſt upon it here. It follows,

10. Charity *rejoiceth not in Iniquity*; *but rejoiceth in the Truth.* This is another of its Excellencies. When Malice and Ill-will towards any have got Poſſeſſion of our Minds, we are pleaſed to ſee them do amiſs, that they may thereby diſgrace themſelves; expoſe themſelves to the Cenſure of others, or give us an Opportunity of accuſing them; like the Devil that tempts Men to Sin, and then upbraids them for it. On the contrary, Charity rejoices not in Iniquity; but rejoices in the Truth, *i. e.* it rejoiceth not in Mens Weakneſſes, Miſcarriages and Follies; but in their Integrity, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, their acting according to Truth, or the Rule of true Religion.

Theſe belong to Charity, and it acts upon theſe two Principles therein; a Zeal for God and Religion, which are hereby honoured; and a Concern for the Advantage of its Neighbour.

And let me add, that as Charity doth not rejoice in Iniquity, ſo it may be implied that it is troubled at it. It is ſenſibly touched with the Wick-

Wickedneſs of Mankind. Thus, *David*, Pſal. cxix. 158. *I beheld the Tranſgreſſors and was grieved, becauſe they kept not thy Word*, ver. 136. *Rivers of Tears run down mine Eyes, becauſe they keep not thy Law.* To ſee Men debaſe themſelves by their Sins, abuſe their Reaſon, affront their Maker, and take Courſes that will iſſue in their Death without Repentance, and plunge them into Hell: This Charity is ſo far from rejoicing at, that it cannot but compaſſionate ſuch a woeful Caſe. And were not our Hearts too much hardned, and we Strangers to the Tenderneſs of Charity, ſuch Spectacles would not a little affect us, would often draw Tears from our Eyes.

11. It is another Property of this admirable Grace, that it *beareth all Things.* So we render it; but according to this Tranſlation, it may not be ſo eaſy to keep up a Diſtinction between this and other Attributes of Charity: Particularly, what is ſaid in the Cloſe of the ſame Verſe, that it *indureth all Things.* We may therefore, I think, agreeably to the Word στέγει, tranſlate it, covereth all Things, and ſo underſtand it of the favourable Excuſes Charity makes for Mens Actions. It will not be too critical in remarking their Faults, too quick in eſpying them. And then it will be willing to conceal them, which ſome take to be the preciſe Meaning of the Word, according to that *Prov.* x. 12. *Hatred ſtirreth up Strife, but Love covereth all Things*, i. e. caſts a Veil over them. It covers them two ways among others. It may be I cannot ſee them: For Love we ſay is blind. And though there is a faulty partial Love, that blinds our Eyes to our Prejudice; yet there is ſomething of this Nature in divine Love and Charity. When we truly love our Neighbour, and are diſpoſed to think as well of him as we

can,

can, and desire always to have Cause of thinking well; we shall be apt to cover all Things amiss as far as we can, *i. e.* not to see them. Or Charity covereth all Things, *i. e.* if it cannot but see Things amiss, it will not unnecessarily expose them. It rejoiceth not in Iniquity; and consequently, will have no Pleasure in divulging and spreading it. And how trying are these Reflections? Bring yourselves, Christians, to the Test here, and examine your own Spirits hereby. And if you do, I am persuaded you will find Reason to fall on your Faces as Self-condemned, and say: If this be Charity, how little have I of it? How much is there in it that we know nothing of? Let us humble ourselves under a Sense of our great Defects, and beg Pardon, and further renewing Grace.

12. The next Property of Charity is that it *believeth all Things*, i. e. all the good Things it can of another. If it hears well of another, any kind and good Things its ready to believe them. *Quicquid volumus, credimus:* What we very much desire, we are very prone to believe. This every one finds to be true. And as Charity has a Complacency in the Good of others; in their Prosperity, their Virtue, Wisdom and Excellency, it catches at any Appearance of these Things, and finds a Disposition to fall in with any Reports concerning them. Some of you, I hope, know what I mean here, by feeling some Resemblance of this Property of Charity in yourselves; as others know it by feeling the contrary, *viz.* a greater Readiness to believe what is Bad, than what is Good of another.

13. As Charity believeth, so it *hopeth all Things*; all favourable Things. It inclines us to hope the best concerning our Brother in doubtful Cases.

If the Thing looks ſuſpicious, and cannot in Strictneſs be defended, yet Charity will hope as well as it can; hope that there may be no ill Intention or Deſign; that he may not have the ſame Conviction concerning the ill of the Thing that others have: Or if it be certainly an ill Thing, that yet it did not proceed from an ill Principle. Or it hopes that, whatſoever the Perſon now is, he may grow wiſer and better; and therefore doth not deſpair of him, and reject him; as utterly unworthy of all farther Love and Care, but waits for his Amendment.

14. Laſtly, *it endureth all Things*; holds out againſt all Diſcouragements, ill Uſage, harſh unkind Treatment. It is patient under many Sufferings, perſeveres in its good Intentions, notwithſtanding ungrateful Returns. It will not change its Courſe, nor lay aſide the Goodneſs that is eſſential to it, whatſoever it ſuffereth: But ὑπομένει it is patient in bearing every Thing; it ſtill holds on its way, rendering Good for Evil, and overcoming Evil with Good. In ſhort, it denotes two Things principally; the Reſolution and Conſtancy of Charity, and its Patience towards our Chriſtian Brethren and Friends. When they give Occaſion of Complaint and Reſentment, as we bear with Children, making Allowance for the Infirmities of their Age, paſſing by their Frowardneſs and Indiſcretion; ſo Charity will deal with our Brethren and Friends, who labour under any Infirmity and Weakneſs of Mind. *We that are ſtrong*, ſays the Apoſtle, *ought to bear the Infirmities of the Weak, and not to pleaſe ourſelves*, Rom. xv. 1. They that are ſtrong in Charity ought to do this: And will do this, according to the Degree of their Charity.

Thus

Thus I have commented upon the Excellencies of this Grace, and touched the ſeveral Properties thereof, laid down by the Apoſtle. It ſuffereth long, not immediately revenging Injuries received; is kind in its Sentiments, Deſires and Actions towards others; it envieth not, doth not grudge the Happineſs or Advantages of another. It vaunteth not itſelf, doth not arrogate to itſelf, to the leſſening of its Neighbour; detract from others to ſet up itſelf; is not puffed up; giving Way to Pride and Vanity of Mind, deſpiſing others: Doth not behave itſelf unſeemly towards them; treating them with Neglect and Contempt; inſulting and triumphing over their Infirmities. It ſeeketh not its own, but denies its Eaſe, Honour, and Intereſt for a common Good: It ſuppreſſeth haſty Paſſion, is not eaſily provoked; it rejoiceth not in Iniquity; taketh Pleaſure, not in Mens Sins, but in their Wiſdom, Virtue, and Goodneſs. Beareth all Things; or covers and excuſes the Faults of others: Believes and hopes all the Good that it can concerning them. And in the mean Time, endureth all Things; is ſteady and perſevering in its Courſe, notwithſtanding all Diſcouragements. I ſhall now

II. Make ſome ſhort Reflections upon the entire Deſcription. And

1. Let me obſerve that this Account of Charity is taken from its more genuine natural Effects. Charity is thus bountiful, kind, *&c.* has all theſe amicable Virtues; but this doth not deny any other Properties of it. For Inſtance, tho' it be kind, yet it is prudent: Tho' it overlook Faults, is inclined to cover them, yet it is not ſo blind, as never to ſee them. Though it believeth all Things, and hopeth all Things, yet it doth not believe without Evidence, much leſs againſt all

Evidence

Evidence to the contrary. Did it not diſtinguiſh its Objects, and make a Diſtinction between Perſons and Things, it would ceaſe to be Charity, loſe its Excellency and Uſefulneſs, and in many Inſtances do more Harm by its Indulgence than by a contrary Severity. So that Limitations here muſt be taken in: Charity muſt be exerciſed with Wiſdom and Diſcretion, and ſhould always come forth with its Retinue of other Virtues and Graces waiting upon it. Nor will any ſuch Deſcription deſtroy, but rather recommend it, render it the more valuable as it is the more reaſonable. And indeed after the utmoſt Reſtrictions of this kind, there is ſtill room for the largeſt and moſt extenſive Charity. You may ſtill believe all Things, in the Apoſtle's Senſe, *i. e.* all the Good you can of your Neighbour; and hope all Things in a reaſonable Exerciſe of Charity; without believing that to be true which you know to be falſe, and hoping Good againſt overbearing Evidence of the contrary.

2. We may take occaſion hence to remark the Excellency of the Chriſtian Religion. It hath not only many Doctrines of admirable Uſe and Comfort, which the Heathen Moraliſts knew nothing of; as all thoſe which concern the Mediation of Chriſt, the Office of the Spirit, and Plan of Goſpel-worſhip: But even the Points cultivated by them we have here repreſented with exceeding great Advantage, and carried farther than they could reach. There is no ſuch Deſcription of Charity in all their Writings as we have in this one Chapter: and the ſame may be ſaid of many other moral and ſocial Virtues and Graces. We have them here in the higheſt Perfection, and without any ſuch Allays and Mixtures

of Infirmity, as we find in the moſt refined Speculations of the Philoſophers.

So that our Deiſts muſt be utterly inexcuſable that reject the Bible under a Pretence of better Entertainment among the Profeſſors of natural Religion. The Bible, beſide many Excellencies peculiar to it, contains the moſt glorious Syſtem of natural Religion of any Book in the World. Theſe Verſes I have been explaining afford an Inſtance to my Purpoſe in the Account they give of Charity. They have ſome Stroaks in them above what the greateſt Moraliſts ever thought of.

3. Another Reflection I would make upon what has been ſaid is, that a great deal goes to conſtitute and make a Man a true Chriſtian. Try yourſelves with Reference to this one Grace. It is not enough that you have ſome of the Properties hereof: You muſt have all of them, in ſome Degree at leaſt; muſt not only do no Injuries to others; but bear them and that with Long-ſuffering; not only be kind, as that denotes Bounty and Liberality towards Men; but kind in your Opinion of them, in your Deſires of their Welfare; you muſt be full of Benevolence and Good-will. It is not enough that you do not invent ill of another and accuſe falſly: You muſt not ſo much as think ill unneceſſarily. And ſo of the reſt.

And then I might obſerve, that it is not enough that we have one Grace, but we muſt have every Grace. We are to *add* to our *Faith Virtue*, and *to Virtue Knowledge, to Knowledge Temperance, to Temperance Patience, to Patience Godlineſs, to this brotherly Kindneſs, and to it Charity; for if theſe be in us and abound, we ſhall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the Knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7, 8. They muſt be in us, or we

we are no Chriſtians, and they muſt abound or we ſhall not be fruitful Chriſtians.

Now take all this into the Character of a Chriſtian, that he has not only Charity with all its Train of Excellencies, but all the reſt of divine Graces; and I think it is evident that to be a Chriſtian (truly ſuch) implies ſomething not only great and important, but difficult: I am afraid I may add ſomething rare, and that there are but few real Chriſtians among us. In the mean time you ſee what your Buſineſs is in the Chriſtian Profeſſion, and what you are to aim at therein, *viz.* to tranſcribe and copy out every divine Grace, Faith, Love, Humility, Charity, *&c.* to diſplay all Things in their natural and proper Fruits. This is the Mark of your high Calling, and according to your Attainments therein you are Chriſtians or not, ſtrong or weak Chriſtians. Upon this

4. If Charity be ſo excellent a Grace, covet it earneſtly and purſue it diligently. I ſhall juſt mention a few Arguments and Motives to preſs this Duty on you. And

Conſider that this is not only amiable in itſelf, but agreeable to the Principles of human Nature. That Notion of a late Philoſopher that Mankind are naturally Enemies one to another, and that the primitive State of Nature was a State of War, is a Reproach to the human Kind, and indeed to their Maker. Compaſſion, Love, Tenderneſs, mutual Forbearance and Friendſhip, are the Things that are moſt natural to us; and therefore are often expreſſed by *Humanity*, as being the proper Offices of human Nature. So that to live in Charity is to live like Men: As the contrary Courſe is the Diſgrace of our Nature, and unmans us. Conſider

That the great Law of Intercourſe, and rule of treating him requires this of us, *viz.* that we ſhould love our Neighbour as ourſelves, and whatſoever we would that others ſhould do unto us, we ſhould do the ſame unto them. How evident is it that we expect Charity from others? Would not have them ſevere in their Cenſures of us, unkind in their Dealings with us, to bear us Ill-will, or do us ill Turns? Conſequently we ought to render the very ſame to them. There is a natural Equity in this, and what we cannot refuſe without the Reproach of our own Minds.

Get this Charity, and it will be the Foundation and Spring of all other Duties you owe to your Neighbour. It will excite you to them, and fit you for them: And at the ſame Time keep you from invading his Property, or any Way breaking in upon his Intereſts. If you love your Neighbour you will not defraud him, not oppreſs him: You will neither injure, nor unneceſſarily grieve him. Love will teach you how to treat him on all Occaſions, and reſtrain you from every Thing that is hurtful to him. Hence that of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* xiii. 10. *Love worketh no Ill to his Neighbour, therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law.*

Glorious would be the Influence of it upon Society. Such a Charity would end all our Quarrels, or rather prevent them. It would arbitrate Differences, and unite the Members of a Community in the firmeſt Bonds. Were we long-ſuffering, kind, free from Pride and Envy; did we believe and hope all Things, and allow Charity to dictate our Words and direct our Converſe, all our Feuds and Animoſities would be over, and nothing remain but in Love to ſerve one another. And it is eaſy to collect

How much it would contribute to the Peace of our Minds; baniſhing all turbulent and diſquieting Paſſions thence; as Envy, Malice, Wrath, Jealouſy and Evil-ſurmiſings. It would give the Mind a Calmneſs and Compoſure. Indeed, Benevolence being our moſt natural State, it would conſequently be our moſt eaſy State. Let me add,

The more Charity and Love we have, the more God-like we are. *God is Love*, ſays the Apoſtle, *and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*, 1 John iv. 16. It was to expreſs his Bounty, and communicate his Goodneſs, that God made this World: That was unqueſtionably one End; and Philoſophers diſpute whether it was not his only End. And it is manifeſt, Charity, Goodneſs and Love, run through his whole Government and fill up every Scene. He is *the Lord, gracious and merciful, Long-ſuffering*, &c. This is his Name, and this is his Nature; as appears from all his Works. So that the more Benevolence, Kindneſs, Bounty and Love we attain, the more we reſemble God. Hereby we are perfect, as our Father in Heaven is perfect. I might ſubjoin,

This is one of the Graces of Heaven; fits us for that State, and will accompany us into it, and make Part of our Happineſs there: But of this in the next Chapter.

CHAP. III.

III. I Come now to conſider the third and laſt Argument, or Proof of the Excellency of Charity; namely, its Duration. *Charity never faileth: But whether there be Prophecies, they ſhall fail;*

whether there be Tongues, they ſhall ceaſe; whether there be Knowledge, it ſhall vaniſh away. For we know in part, and we propheſy in part: But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away, &c. The greateſt and moſt pompous of theſe Gifts, while a Man has them, will not avail him, as to Acceptance with God, without the ſanctifying Graces of the Holy Spirit, particularly without Charity. And then they are confined in their Uſe, limited to the preſent World. In Heaven there will be no more Prophecies, and ſpeaking with Tongues. But Charity never faileth. The Apoſtle here aſſerteth

1. The everlaſting Duration of Charity. It never faileth.

2. The temporary Nature of the other Gifts with which Charity is compared, and to which it is preferred, as Prophecy, Tongues, Knowledge, they ſhall fail and ceaſe.

3. He intimates the Reaſon of their ceaſing, *ver.* 9, 10, 11, 12. They are all imperfect, we know but *in part*, and propheſy but *in part*; and therefore when we are arrived in the World of Light and Perfection Above, there will be no further uſe of them.

I. We have here aſſerted the everlaſting Duration of Charity: It never faileth. Whence I would obſerve, that Charity is one of the Graces of Heaven; and on that Account excellent, that it continues in the other World, when many other Gifts and Graces fail.

I have already hinted that the Apoſtle's Deſign and Reaſoning in this Chapter, makes it neceſſary to interpret Charity, (chiefly at leaſt) of Charity towards our Neighbour; the Love of Mankind, of our fellow Men, and eſpecially of good Men. This is the Charity I am now to conſider,

der, as continuing in Heaven. Not but that Charity in the higher Senſe, as it ſignifies Love to God, ſhall continue there alſo. That will no Queſtion be one of the moſt eminent Graces of Heaven, and the exerciſe of it according to the Laws of that State, be a good part of our Work, and of our Happineſs in Heaven. Some have made it a Doubt, whether our Duty to our Neighbour, or our Duty to God, be of the greateſt Weight and Importance in Religion; and conſequently, which ought to be moſt inculcated. But methinks our Lord has decided that Queſtion, when he ſays, *to love the Lord our God with all our Heart*, &c. *is the firſt and great Commandment*, Mat. xxii. 37, 38. Tho' he adds indeed, *ver.* 39. that *the ſecond is like unto it*, viz. *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thyſelf. It is like to it*, i. e. it is another great Commandment. However it is but the ſecond: The other is the firſt and great Commandment. Love to God is the Spring, Riſe and Rule of all our Love and Duty towards our Neighbour, and of all our Services and Offices in Religion. It is ſo now, and ſo it will be in Heaven. When we love our Neighbour, there we love God in him; love our Neighbour in Conformity to the Nature, and in Obedience to the Will of God. So that though my Subject directs me to conſider Love, as it more particularly reſpects our Neighbour in the other State; I would not be underſtood, as if I thought the Love of God was leſs our Concern either on Earth or in Heaven. To love him, as it comprehends much of our Duty here, ſo it will be much of our Employment there, and no ſmall part of our Heaven. It is however, as we ſaid, the other Senſe of Charity or Love, I muſt at preſent confine my Diſcourſe to. And in

this Senſe, Charity never faileth; it is one of the Graces of Heaven; it ſhall go with us into the other World, and be part of our Employment there to all Eternity: And I may add, part of our Happineſs too.

Now in the handling of this Point, I ſhall

I. Enquire how our Charity or Love to our Neighbour or Brother ſhall be exerciſed and expreſſed in Heaven.

II. Give the Reaſons of its Continuance there, why it never faileth. And

III. Hint at the Excellency of it on this Account.

I. I ſhall enquire how our Charity or Love to our Neighbour or Brother ſhall be exerciſed and expreſſed in Heaven. And here I muſt premiſe, that it will not be altogether what it is now. Several of the Attributes and Properties that belong to it now will ceaſe in Heaven. The mighty Difference there will be in the State of our Brethren, and in our own State, will make a Difference in our Love. For though as to its Principles and general Nature, it will be the ſame; yet the Objects being very different, it will differently ſhew and exert itſelf. I might illuſtrate this by going over moſt of the Properties of Charity, as mentioned in the Chapter before us. For Inſtance, it cannot be ſaid of Charity there, that it is Long-ſuffering. The Reaſon is, there will be nothing to try its Forbearance: It will have no Offences to forgive, no Offenders to excite its Mercy, Grace and Patience towards. Nor will there be room for the ſame Expreſſions of Kindneſs as now. The Inhabitants of that World are neither ſorrowful nor poor: All Tears are *wiped away from their Eyes*, &c. and conſequently there

there will be no Occaſion for thoſe Succours and Miniſtries of Kindneſs, that the preſent Diſtreſs of our Brethren often calls for.

As to ſome of the following Particulars, that Charity envieth not, vaunteth not itſelf, is not puffed up, doth not behave itſelf unſeemly, *&c.* Theſe may be accounted Properties of heavenly Charity, and belong to that Decorum, Modeſty, and Sweetneſs with which it diſplays, and conſtantly ſhews itſelf. It is not boiſterous, arrogant, and aſſuming; but all its Acts are pure unmixed Love and Goodneſs, without any Allay of Vanity, Pride, or Roughneſs towards the Objects of its Kindneſs.

But then it cannot be ſaid of it ſo juſtly, that it ſeeketh not her own. Not that it is ſelfiſh, but properly there is no Place for Self-denial: None there encroach upon another's Right: nor do the Circumſtances of any require that another ſhould depart from his Right on their Account. The Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and all manner of Perfection of the Society of Heaven, is ſuch, that all keep in their proper Sphere, act reaſonably and to the Satisfaction of all; and conſequently none have Reaſon to make Conceſſions and Allowance, or occaſion for any Complaints. So that Charity in Heaven is diſcharged from this difficult Duty it has at preſent to attend: not ſeeking its own; giving up its own Intereſts for the Good of others.

Nor can the other Properties that follow be applied to Charity in the State above: That it is not eaſily provoked; that it rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth. There is really no Matter of Provocation remaining; nor any Iniquity to try the Candor and Goodneſs of its Temper. All Things done there are pleaſing and

grateful, and according to the Laws of Juſtice and Truth.

And the ſame may be ſaid of the four laſt of its Excellencies mentioned in this Liſt. That it beareth all Things, believeth all Things, hopeth all Things, and endureth all Things. There is nothing among the heavenly People liable to Suſpicion; and conſequently there is no Room for a charitable Opinion, and a charitable Hope: And where there is no injurious, unkind, ill Treatment, there can be nothing to prove the Conſtancy and Patience of Charity. When we get to Heaven our Charity will have done bearing and enduring, in the Senſe here intended.

So that though Charity indeed never faileth, tho' there is a great deal of it in Heaven, yea Heaven is its proper Element and Region; yet our Charity there is of a different Conſtitution from what it is at preſent. Some of its Properties are out of Date; whilſt others more agreeable to that State will eminently take Place, and appear in greater Luſtre and Vigour.

Which being premiſed, allow me now to take a brief Survey of the Subject; the Charity of Heaven: to repreſent it to you in its Nature and Workings; to ſhew what it is, and how it diſplays itſelf. You will remember that I am entering into a Region that may be called, in ſome Meaſure, *Terra incognita*, an unknown Country. And therefore, as I cannot pretend to point out all the Offices of Charity there, ſo neither to be fully certain of ſuch as I mention. I may overlook many in my Account: and, it may be, inſert ſome without ſufficient Grounds. I ſhall however give you my Thoughts in a few Words. And,

1. I ſuppoſe that the Charity of Heaven lies in a ſuitable and high Eſteem of all the Members of that Society. This is a ſpecial Part of the Love that is due to them, and indeed the Foundation of it all. *The Spirits of* the *Juſt* there are *made perfect*, Heb. xii. 23. *Perfect* in all moral and divine Excellencies. They are *preſented Faultleſs before the Preſence of his Glory with exceeding great Joy*, Jude ver. 24. 'Tis a glorious Church, *the Church of the Firſt-Born, whoſe Names are written in Heaven*, and which actually is in Heaven; *without Spot or Wrinkle or any ſuch Thing*; *holy and without Blemiſh*, Epheſ. v. 27.

Now thus Charity conſiders its Objects; views all its Brethren in this amiable, perfect State; and conſequently inwardly approves and values them. It has no Suſpicions concerning their Sincerity; no Objection to their Character, as if they did not deſerve love. And every one will obſerve what a Foundation is hereby laid for all the mutual Endearments of Heaven. Nothing diverts and damps our Love more in the preſent State than that our Brethren do not appear, at leaſt to us, worthy of it. One has this Blemiſh and Infirmity; another a different one, (real or ſuppoſed; and the Effect is the ſame, whether it be the one or the other;) and hence Shyneſs, Diſtance, Coolneſs, *&c.* But in Heaven *the King's Daughter is all glorious within*, and ſhines in her excellent Cloathing: And this every one ſees and acknowledges in his fellow Saint there, and accordingly has an high Eſteem of him.

2. The Charity of Heaven conſiſts and expreſſes itſelf in an entire Benevolence and Goodwill to others; to all the Inhabitants of that World. Benevolence is of the Eſſence of Love, and equally ſuits it here and hereafter. Whomſoever we love we

we wiſh well to; and the ſame we ſhall do in Heaven, in the moſt ſincere and intenſe manner. Our Charity there will come up to the Precept, which requires us *to love our Neighbour as our ſelves.* Whatſoever we deſire and wiſh for our ſelves, we ſhall as truly deſire and wiſh for our Brethren, and, it may be, with the ſame Degree of Affection.

3. It ſhews itſelf in a hearty Rejoicing in their Welfare and Happineſs. There is ſomething of this in divine Charity, even in its preſent low State. It *rejoices with them that do rejoice*, Rom. xii. 5. This the Apoſtle exemplifies in himſelf with Reſpect to the *Theſſalonians*, 1 Theſſ. iii. 9. *What Thanks can we render to God for you; for all the Joy wherewith we joy for your ſakes before our God.* And again, 2 Theſſ. 1. 3. *We are bound to thank God always for you, Brethren; as it is meet, becauſe your Faith groweth exceedingly, and the Chartiy of every one of you towards each other aboundeth.* This holy Man beheld the Proſperity and good Eſtate of theſe Chriſtians with inward Satisfaction and Pleaſure. So that other Apoſtle, 3 Epiſt. John ver 4. *I have no greater Joy than to hear that my Children walk in the Truth.* Here is ſomething of this Temper in divine Charity on Earth; and much more of it in Heaven, where Charity is come to its full Stature. And let me obſerve (as a Conſideration of no little Comfort) that ſuch is the Enlargement of Men's Minds there, that every one's Good is accounted by every one as his own. The Apoſtle declares his Confidence concerning the *Corinthians*, that *his Joy was the Joy of them all*, 2 Cor. ii. 3. But this may be concluded with much more Aſſurance concerning the Inhabitants of the other World. There Joy is mutual

mutual; ſuch is their Charity, that the Joy of one is the Joy of all. And then,

4. Their Charity gives them a Complacency and Satisfaction even in the ſuperior Happineſs of their Brethren. A Point that, it may be, tries this Virtue here on Earth as much as any Thing elſe. Charity indeed envieth not, but good Men that have ſome Charity are apt to be touched with that Paſſion: *The Spirit that is in us luſteth to Envy.* But in Heaven all Envy is excluded. The Saints there behold the twelve Apoſtles upon their twelve Thrones; and the Martyrs with their peculiar Crowns without any Uneaſineſs or undue Reſentment: but derive a ſort of Pleaſure to themſelves from the Preferment of others; in which they act upon two divine Principles, Affection to their Brethren, and Subjection to the Appointment of God; a full Acquieſcence in his Diſpoſals, ſaying as the Apoſtle, *Rev.* xvi. 5. (to apply that to our preſent Purpoſe) *Thou art Righteous, O Lord, becauſe thou haſt judged thus.* That Charity that never fails and abides in Heaven, not only reconciles the Saints to their own Stations, but to all the Diſtinctions that divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs makes there; the Reaſon of which, I preſume, they better underſtand than we can in our State of Diſtance and Darkneſs: However, the Reverence they have of the Wiſdom and Sovereignty of God, makes them not only reſign and ſubmit to, but even applaud his Proceedings in theſe Matters.

5. I cannot but add, that as the Charity of Heaven makes them all eaſy and pleaſed with the State of Things with them; ſo, in Conſequence of this, it diſpoſes them to an entire Harmony and Concord among themſelves. There are no Animoſities and Jarrs. As Envy, ſo Strife ceaſes there for ever. We are commanded now to be

of

of one Heart, and one mind, Phil. ii. 2. σύμψυχοι, to have Souls knit together and united, of the ſame Bent and Complexion. But how little ſoever we find of this at preſent, it will be the happy Attainment of the Saints in Heaven. There will, no doubt, be a Variety among them; but Charity will make them all eaſy in that Variety. The higheſt Seraph will not deſpiſe the loweſt Claſs of Spirits, becauſe they cannot riſe up to his Notes, and do not burn with his Zeal. All will be calm in the Regions of the bleſſed. They will *keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace:* Have a perfect Harmony among them; ariſing partly from greater Meaſures of Light, and partly from a Fullneſs of divine Charity and Love.

6. No doubt their Charity will diſpoſe them to mutual Converſe, and to a great deal of friendly Intercourſe. Converſe is the Life and Pleaſure of Society here on Earth; that which gives it its chief Reliſh. And can we imagine it will be wanting in Heaven, where there is the moſt perfect Society? Indeed one cannot think of ſuch a Collection of excellent Beings as make up the general Aſſembly; Angels, and all the Spirits of the Juſt, Partriarchs, Prophets, Apoſtles, and Martyrs, and all the wiſe and good Souls that ever lived in our World; one cannot, I ſay, think of theſe united in one Body without ſuppoſing Converſe among them. Shall we be admitted into *Abraham*'s Boſom? ſit down with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, in the Kingdom of God, and have no Communication with theſe divine Heroes? How they converſe we know not; nor do we know all the Subjects of their Converſation. Sometimes, 'tis like, they will read Lectures to one another upon the Works of Creation; where every one, I queſtion not, will be able to philoſophize with Penetration and Skill, far exceeding

ceeding the greateſt Proficients here on Earth: Sometimes of the Works of Providence; towards the World, toward the Church, and towards themſelves in particular. Sometimes, and more eſpecially, on the Works of Grace; where they will compare notes, each one telling his Story, and going through the glorious Hiſtory as he himſelf was more immediately concerned therein; and, at the ſame time, liſtening to the Memoirs of his Brother Saint.

And how will they mingle Hearts and Affections when thus employed? Two Things among others will very much endear their Converſe; the Light and Wiſdom of it; the Goodneſs and Charity that runs through it. There will be none of our preſent Blunders; but all their Comments on this and the other Subject will be perfectly juſt and Good. We now ſee through a Glaſs darkly; then Face to Face; and accordingly we ſhall diſcourſe. Divine Charity will then make every Chriſtian ready to communicate, and will render the Manner of the Converſation moſt agreeable. O the Heaven of ſuch a Society! Who would not long to be there?

7. We may ſuppoſe the Charity of Heaven will expreſs itſelf in mutual Congratulations: Rejoicing over one another; triumphing in the glorious Iſſue of their Conflicts and Warfare, and of the divine Grace and Love towards them; to which the Remembrance of former Dangers will not a little contribute. Nor is it improbable that our Charity will flow out in a peculiar manner towards our old Friends, and vent itſelf in divine Congratulations towards them particularly. We ſhall rejoice over them in Love: eſpecially ſuch of them as we remember to have ſtood in more ſlippery Places; and who, as the Expreſſion is,

were ſaved ſo as by Fire; ſuch as have come out of great Tribulation, and have waſhed their Garments, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb. Nor is it unlikely,

8. That the Charity of Heaven will have its good Offices; its benign and kind Miniſtries towards the Brethren. It may be the greater Adepts, the more experienced Saints that have been Students in the Church above for many Ages, and long exerciſed in the Employments of that State, will inſtruct young Colonies of Saints upon their firſt Arrival. We read of *a new Song ſung before the Throne, that none can learn* but the virgin Saints, *the hundred and forty four Thouaſnd that were redeemed from the Earth*, Rev. xiv. 3. It may be, the Saints in Heaven will teach one another the Notes of this Song: the greater Proficients ſetting the Tune, as I may ſay.

And may we not ſuppoſe, among the reſt of their Offices of Friendſhip and Love, that they will ſtand ready to receive their Brethren; as they arrive from this Earth, and conduct them to their Manſions. 'Tis a Conjecture that ſome have found no ſmall Pleaſure in; that our old dear Friends in Heaven before us will meet us (as it were) on our Journey: or if it be the ſpecial Office of Angels to convoy and carry us into *Abraham*'s Boſom; yet that they will be ready to receive us on our Entrance, and lead us to the Place prepared for us. And what careſſes, what mutual Endearments will then paſs between theſe happy Souls, I leave you to imagine.

9. As Charity never fails in Heaven; ſo I know not but it may extend itſelf to our Earth, and variouſly work towards us here below. 'Tis not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe we are ſometimes remembred in the Conferences our Friends entertain them-

themſelves within the other World. They cannot but know whom they left behind, and where they left us; in what Circumſtances of Temptation and Danger. And no doubt their Affections will ſuitably go out towards us; pitying us, wiſhing us well, I might be allowed to ſay (I think without treſpaſſing on the Rules of Divinity) praying for us. And what other Offices of Love they may be commiſſioned to diſcharge on our Behalf, I know not. But thus much we may certainly infer from the Greatneſs of their Charity, and the Vigour of their Affection: That whatever good Offices are appointed them, they will chearfully comply therewith.

And ſo I have given you ſome Account of the Charity of Heaven; have ſhewn what it includes, and wherein it is expreſſed: And am now,

II. To touch upon the Reaſons why Charity remains in Heaven. *Charity never* faileth.

Conſider it in Compariſon with the other Gifts of which it is ſaid *they ſhall fail.* And one Reaſon then is, that in Heaven there will be no Occaſion for them. There will be no need of Prophecy; the Deſign of which is either to make known a Thing not revealed before, or to expound and make more plain what was more darkly revealed. But Heaven requires no ſuch Office as this: The clear perfect Light of that World renders it uſeleſs. And the ſame may be ſaid of the reſt as I ſhall have Occaſion to obſerve hereafter. But then Charity has its full Scope and Exerciſe there, nor is there any thing in that State to make it uſeleſs.

Further; As there is Room for it, ſo it is neceſſary. It ſuits the heavenly State; and indeed is an eminent and neceſſary Qualification of every Subject there; without which he could not be happy;

happy; would not be fit for the Company and Converſe thereof; nor find any Entertainment in the bleſſed Society of Saints and Angels: Not to ſay that to a Mind wanting Charity the Heaven of others would very much diminiſh, if not deſtroy, his own. He would not bear to ſee their Crowns and Scepters; eſpecially if they were ſuperior to his. The greater Luſtre and Glory of the Seraphim, the higher Seats of the Apoſtles and Martyrs, would excite his Envy: The Conſequence of which would be the Loſs of his Happineſs.

So that it is certain Charity doth remain, and muſt remain in Heaven. The Exerciſe of it is indeed Part of the Bleſſedneſs of that State; and without it there can be no ſuch State at all.

III. I ſhall repreſent the Excellency of Charity on this Account, as it never fails. But it will properly fall under Conſideration when I come to the Concluſion of the Chapter; where the Apoſtle gives it the Preference to Faith and Hope: When alſo you may expect a fuller Improvement of this Matter. In the mean while let me ſuggeſt a Reflection or two.

1. What has been ſaid may give us a pleaſing Idea of Heaven. That is a World of Charity and Love; of pure and perfect Charity. Charity remaineth there; and there is no Uncharitableneſs; no Envy, Malice, Strife, or Diſcord. *The Son of Man removes out of his Kingdom all Things that offend, and they who do Iniquity*, Matth. xiii. 41. τὰ σκάνδαλα, all Things that either tempt or grieve. Charity remains in Heaven in its beſt and moſt grateful State: Not a ſorrowing, ſympathizing, a patient, pardoning Charity; but a rejoicing triumphing Charity. This fills Heaven, fills every Breaſt there.

2. We

2. We may hence collect wherein our Preparation for Heaven conſiſts; namely, in acquiring the Graces of that State; a Temper that ſuits it, particularly divine Charity. O employ your Endeavours this way! And in order to attain it

Study Charity: View it in its amiable Qualities; in its Agreeableneſs to human Nature, in its happy Influences upon Society, and upon the Peace and Comfort of your own Minds. View it in the Rules of the Goſpel, and in the glorious Example of the Lord Jeſus. And then follow it to Heaven, and contemplate it there in all its Beauties and Glories. Thus ſtudy it, that you may diſcern what it is; how worthy of your Choice, Deſire, and Purſuit. And then

Not only ſtudy it, but pray for it. I took Notice that it is natural to us as Men: Meaning, it is agreeable to the original and genuine Principles of human Nature. But it muſt be remembred that the old Serpent has ſhot ſome of his Poiſon into us, and envenomed our Nature; and conſequently we muſt look higher than Nature, if we would attain this Grace; which like *every* other *good and perfect Gift, is from above, and cometh from the Father of Lights.* We muſt *be taught of God*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *to love one another*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 9. Beg therefore that he would be your Teacher by his Spirit; make you Partakers of the divine Nature in this Inſtance; for *God is Love*; and the more we have of Love the more of God; the more of the divine Nature; and the fitter Company we ſhall be for the good People above. But I go on,

II. To obſerve the temporary Nature of the other Gifts with which Charity is compared, and to which it is preferred. The Apoſtle having aſſerted that Charity never fails, proceeds to aſſert

the contrary concerning the Gifts which he compares with it; as Prophecy, Tongues, Knowledge, ver. 8. *Whether there be Prophecies, they ſhall fail; whether there be Tongues, they ſhall ceaſe; whether there be Knowledge, it ſhall vaniſh away.*

Prophecy is one of the Gifts mentioned which are ſaid to fail in the other World: Which more generally imports two Things in Scripture; the making known ſome future diſtant Events, and ſo it is the ſame as foretelling, or the explaining what had been foretold. A Prophet either brought a new Revelation, or expounded and commented upon an old and more obſcure Revelation already made: Or it may ſometimes in the New Teſtament note the Gift of Teaching by immediate Inſpiration. And it is not unlikely but in many, at leaſt, of the firſt and Apoſtlick Churches, the Teachers had this Gift; performing their reſpective Offices under the ſpecial Conduct and Afflatus of the Holy Ghoſt. But in Heaven this Gift ſhall ceaſe; Prophecy ſhall fail: There ſhall be no new Revelations, no Predictions, none inſpired to interpret ſuch Revelations as from time to time were made to the Church. Tongues ſhall ceaſe alſo. The ſpeaking with Tongues ('tis known) was among the extraordinary Gifts of the primitive Church. The Apoſtle mentions it in the Liſt of theſe Gifts, 1 Cor. xii. 10. *To another is given by the Spirit divers kinds of Tongues.* This Gift was common in the firſt Age of Chriſtianity; and a very glorious one it was: by which Perſons were enabled to ſpeak Languages they had never learned; and that immediately; a Skill that ſome can never attain by the utmoſt Induſtry, and none now can attain without a long and diligent Application in a proper Method of Study. The Deſign of it was, that they who had it might converſe

verſe with Strangers and Foreigners in their own Tongue, by which they had two Advantages: They were able to ſpeak to them intelligibly; and then doing it in this manner (in a Tongue the Knowledge of which was inſpired) they might juſtly expect the better Attention. Now, ſaith the Apoſtle, this Gift will ceaſe in the other State. *Whether there be Tongues, they ſhall ceaſe.*

He adds; *Whether there be Knowledge, it ſhall vaniſh away.* By which, no doubt, we muſt underſtand ſome extraordinary Gift. The Apoſtle refers to it in the ſecond Verſe. *Though I have the Gift of Prophecy, and underſtand all Myſteries, and all Knowledge.* It is not eaſy, I grant, to aſcertain the Meaning of this Gift, and determine what particular kind of Knowledge the Apoſtle intends. It may be, it is the Knowledge of what he ſo often elſewhere calls Myſteries, *viz.* a Skill to expound the Old Teſtament Scriptures; to interpret the Prophecies, ſuch particularly as refer to Chriſt and the Goſpel State; and alſo an Ability to foretell ſome great Events in the Chriſtian Church; as the calling of the Gentiles, the Degeneracy of the Church, the Riſe and Fall of Antichriſt, and the like. It was unqueſtionably an inſpired Gift by which they were let into ſome Secrets and Myſteries that others did not underſtand; and that they themſelves without this Gift would not have underſtood. *To one*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *is given the Word of Knowledge by the Spirit*, 1 Cor. xii. 8. The Spirit imparted to them ſome ſpecial Knowledge in ſome great and important Points of Religion. Refer it to the Old Teſtament Prophecies; and it was an eminent Gift of Knowledge, to be able to apply theſe to particular Events, and declare, with Authority, when and wherein they were fulfilled. And if we ex-

tend it to the State of the Chriſtian Religion in after Ages; it was an illuſtrious Gift, and of great Uſe to the Church then, and even ſtill. Well; ſays the Text, this ſhall vaniſh away. So that in a Word, there will be no Prophecy, no ſpeaking with Tongues, and no ſuch Knowledge in Heaven; no Place for any of theſe extraordinary Gifts.

III. We have here intimated the Reaſon of their ceaſing. *For we know in part, and propheſy in part: But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part ſhall be done away.* Other probable Reaſons might be aſſigned why there ſhall be none of the mentioned Gifts in Heaven. But the Apoſtle reſolves all into this, that they ſhall be ſwallowed up in the Abyſs of Perfection there. They are low and imperfect, and therefore ſhall give Place to the Light and Perfection of the other World. *Knowledge*, ſays he, *ſhall vaniſh away*; juſt as the Light of a Candle vaniſhes at the Appearance of the Sun, and is loſt in its Luſtre and Brightneſs. And hence let me obſerve, *That Heaven is a State of Perfection; and ſuch as ſuperſedes, and makes unneceſſary, all the imperfect Things of the preſent State.* And here,

1. I ſhall briefly ſhew what the Perfection of Heaven is.

2. Enquire how it muſt be underſtood that the Perfection of Heaven ſuperſedes, and makes unneceſſary the imperfect Things of the preſent State.

1. I ſhall briefly ſhew what the Perfection of Heaven is. And the Text leads me to remark;

1. That there will be a Perfection of Knowledge there. *Now*, ſays the Apoſtle, *we know in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part ſhall be done away.* And in the twelfth

twelfth Verſe; *Now we ſee through a Glaſs darkly; but then Face to Face: Now I know in part; but then ſhall I know even as alſo I am known.* By which he inſinuates there ſhall be an Improvement of our Knowledge in the other World, both with Reſpect to the Manner and Meaſure of it; and that it will be in ſuch a State as to deſerve the Name of Perfection. I am not now to conſider the ſeveral Objects of our Knowledge; nor in what manner we ſhall know the Things we are converſant with. Something of this will fall in my way in the Progreſs of the Diſcourſe.

In the general, I do ſuppoſe we ſhall know ſo much of natural Divinity as concerns our Happineſs; ſhall know the Works of Nature, and the God of Nature; and that in a more clear and diſtinct manner than is poſſible in our preſent State. The meaneſt Saint in Heaven, no doubt will, exceed the greateſt Philoſophers on Earth in Knowledge; and 'tis likely in the Knowledge of natural Things: have a more extenſive Knowledge of God's Works, of the ſeveral Syſtems that compoſe the Univerſe, and better underſtand the Philoſophy of them than any, even the greateſt Maſters, now do.

And then for divine Revelation, [Chriſtian Divinity] the Concernments of Religion according to the Plan of the Goſpel: This will be the Entertainment of the Saints in Heaven. All the great Myſteries of Religion will be then unveiled, and lie open to their View. For Inſtance, with Reference to the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Atonement made by the Son of God in our Nature, with the ſeveral Queſtions conſequent thereupon, either now too high for our Faculties, or, at leaſt, ſet in too dim and faint a Light for our Eyes. There we ſhall have a thouſand Dif-

ficulties cleared up to us that now we cannot maſter, and that we are contending about in the Dark: ſhall have a clear Perception of Things, and know as we are known. For ſo we may warrantably conclude from what we are here told, *viz.* that *when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away.* The Apoſtle means indeed the imperfect Gifts ſhall be done away. But the Argument is, that they ſhall therefore be done away becauſe they are imperfect; and conſequently do not ſuit the State above, which is a State of Perfection, and particularly (as I implied) a State of perfect Knowledge.

But it may be asked: Will the Saints in Heaven arrive at once and immediately upon their Admiſſion thither to Perfection in Knowledge? and doth not the Text imply this, when it compares our State here and hereafter, and calls the one that which is perfect, and the other that which is imperfect? I anſwer: It ſeems to me more likely the Knowledge of Heaven will admit of Improvement. Many Reaſons (probable Reaſons I mean) might be given for this, though we cannot conclude any thing with full Certainty. *Adam* in Innocency was perfect, (perfect in Knowledge;) was made after the Image of God, and made perfect: But I cannot queſtion he would have been a greater Philoſopher, a greater Divine, and a greater Saint, after he had been exerciſed in the Contemplation of the Works of God, and in the Services of Religion for ſome Ages, and had paſt through a thouſand Years Probation and Tryal; would have been greater and wiſer than he was on the Day of his Creation. And who can imagine the Saints in Heaven will have nothing to improve their Minds in the Midſt of the many glorious Objects that ſurround them; and that they ſhall

know

know as much of God and of his Works the firſt Day of their arrival there as after ſeveral Ages of Contemplation.

But it may further be asked: How then are they perfect? I anſwer: Their Knowledge is free from Error: 'Tis clear, diſtinct, and certain. Our beſt and moſt diligent Studies here are wofully incumbred: Great Difficulty and Suſpenſe attends them; and often they iſſue in Blunders. There is a Mixture of Error with our Truth, and too frequently we embrace Error inſtead of Truth.

One Reaſon is, *we ſee through a Glaſs darkly*, (as the Apoſtle expreſſes it;) view Things thro' an imperfect Medium; and ſo do not ſee them fully, nor always truly. But in Heaven our Knowledge will be perfect, that is, free from this Defect: We ſhall ſee without Miſtake; know without Error.

Beſides our Knowledge there will be fully anſwerable to our Capacity, and in this Senſe perfect. The Mind will be filled according to the Extent of its Faculties. 'Tis not neceſſary to ſuppoſe that every Saint ſhall know as much as the Angels; as the Seraphim, the higheſt Order of Angels: or that all the Saints ſhall be of equal Size, and have like Meaſures of Knowledge. As one Star differeth from another Star in Glory; ſo ſhall one Saint differ from another, 1 *Cor.* xv. 41, 42. All the Veſſels of Glory ſhall be filled; not that they are equally capacious; but the leaſt may be ſaid to be perfectly filled as well as the greateſt, though it contains leſs. So that if it be allowed their Knowledge increaſes, that will not infer any Imperfection. They are always perfect in the preſent Inſtance. That they grow more

perfect, that is, know more, is owing to the Enlargement of their Faculties.

Further, the Knowledge of Heaven is perfect, and may be ſaid to be ſo; as it is always ſatisfying; fully ſatisfactory. They that are there always know what they deſire to know; being pleaſed with, and acquieſcing in, their Attainments; which cannot be ſaid of our preſent imperfect Knowledge. We are often ſeeking Truth and cannot find it; prying into this or that Point with a painful Curioſity; and that to no Purpoſe. Either the Queſtion is too great for us, or a Veil is thrown over it; either what we cannot, or may not know; either above our Capacity, or lies hid, not ſtanding in a proper Light. And hence we weary our ſelves in fruitleſs Purſuits. But nothing of this diſturbs their Minds in Heaven. There Knowledge fills the Mind, and conſequently bounds the Deſire. The Tree of Knowledge under which they repoſe themſelves is a Tree of Life to them; gives them full Satisfaction and Pleaſure.

Once more. Their Knowledge may be called perfect in compariſon of our Knowledge here on Earth. They know more Things, greater Things, and after a more excellent manner. Though their Light be limited, yet ſo far as they ſee (and 'tis a great way) they ſee clearly. There is no Error in their Knowledge, nor any painful Inquiſitiveneſs, or uneaſy prying remaining with them.

So in ſhort, though we ſuppoſe an Advance in Knowledge there, that is well enough conſiſtent with Perfection. When they are capable of more, they have more. But they always have what at preſent and at that Inſtant they are capable of. And conſequently it may properly enough be ſaid, that in Heaven that which is perfect is come.

2. As

2. As they are perfect in Knowledge, ſo in all other Graces. What theſe are, and what their Perfection, it is not my Purpoſe now to examine. For though nothing is more ſuitable to a Diſcourſe of Heaven, yet, as it is not my Deſign to enlarge on that Subject, and as the Text leads me to a particular View of it as a State of Knowledge, I ſhall in a great Meaſure paſs over this Head.

Let me obſerve however, that all ſinful Infirmities are done away in Heaven. *When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part*, in this Reſpect, *ſhall be done away.* There will be no Grace in part only, but every Grace will be finiſhed and compleat. There will be Love without Enmity, Delight without any Averſion, Reſignation and Devotion without any Reluctance. The Spirits of the Juſt are made perfect. The whole Church above is a glorious Church, *without Spot, Wrinkle, Blemiſh, or any ſuch thing*, Eſpheſ. v. 27. And each Saint *preſented faultleſs* before the divine Preſence *with exceeding Joy*, Jude ver. 24. ἀμώμους; the Word ſignifies ſuch as are above all Exception, and ſuch as the greateſt Carper knows not how to find Fault with. And this will be the bleſſed Condition of the Saints in the other World, *when that which is perfect is come.* Nothing will remain with them that will appear a Blemiſh in the Eyes of their Brethren. Nor will they find any thing in themſelves of which they can complain. All will be right and well with them. O glorious Day! I am ſatisfied ſome of you (now and then at leaſt) exult and rejoice in hope of it. Methinks we ſhould be ready, upon hearing theſe Things, to ſtretch the Wings that we may fly and be at reſt. But I proceed

II. To inquire how the Perfection of Heaven ſuperſedes, and makes unneceſſary the imperfect Things

Things of the preſent State. This you ſee the Text not only intimates, but expreſſes, *When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away.* How muſt this be underſtood? I anſwer:

As to the Particulars more immediately referred to, (Prophecy, ſpeaking with Tongues, and Knowledge) 'tis plain they will be done away, as giving Place to an higher State of Things. They were indeed purely calculated for the State of Things in the primitive Church. *The Manifeſtation of the Spirit,* ſays the Apoſtle, *is given to every Man to profit withal,* 1 Cor. xii. 7. And then he reckons up the Diverſities of Gifts and Operations. All theſe were given for the Uſe of the Church on Earth, and more particularly ſubſerved the firſt State of Religion, the planting Chriſtianity in the World. When that was done, and the Canon of the New Teſtament finiſhed, theſe Gifts continued no longer; Prophecy failed, Tongues ceaſed, and Knowledge vaniſhed away. It ſeems the Church on Earth was not thought to need theſe Gifts: How much leſs that in Heaven? What need of Prophecy, when all are more than Prophets, and greater than the greateſt of them? And what need of the Word of Knowledge, (or Knowledge of Myſteries) when the Veil is drawn aſide, and the whole Scheme and Syſtem of divine Truths is every one's Poſſeſſion. So that theſe Things that are in part ſhall be done away as being ſwallowed up in the Perfection of the other World.

And then as to other imperfect Things: imperfect Graces; theſe ſhall be done away. Heaven will ſet us above them; not by laying them quite aſide, but by perfecting them, or ſubſtituting ſomething elſe inſtead of them. Some of them will

will quite ceaſe; as I ſhall have Occaſion afterwards to ſhew. And the reſt will be here modelled and formed, as I may ſay, and appear in ſo different a State as to be very different Things. Thus when in Heaven, and we ſee Face to Face, there will be no Occaſion for the preſent Glaſs we ſee thro'. No, the Imperfection of our Knowledge will ceaſe, and our imperfect Manner of knowing too. So Love, as it vents itſelf in Deſires: Love as it is at preſent often diverted, interrupted, and at laſt cloy'd and hindered in its Aſpirings: This ſhall ceaſe, ſhall no more be a murmuring complaining, but a joyous triumphant Affection. In a Word, ſome of the Graces, as Faith and Hope particularly, ſhall quite be done away; and others ſhall appear in a different Dreſs and Mode; their Imperfections ſhall be done away. *Whether there be Prophecies, they ſhall fail; whether there be Tongues,* I may add, whether there be Deſire, Love, Joy, or any other Grace; all ſhall in ſome Meaſure be changed. He that ſitteth on the Throne ſhall make all Things new. The Perfection of that World ſwallows up the Imperfection of this.

A practical Reflection or two ſhall conclude my Diſcourſe on this Head.

1. What has been ſaid may teach us to moderate our Regards to a great many Things that we are apt to be not a little fond of in this World. Whatever ſhall be done away and not partake of the Perfection of the other World, it is evident ought not to be of any great Account with us. And how many Things, if we judge by this Rule, will ſink in their Price, that now we ſet a high Value on; and be thrown under foot. Even thoſe extraordinary Gifts, that were inſpired by the Spirit of God, ſhall be done away; will be out of Date in Hea-

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ven. Much more ſhall the lower common Gifts of Man's acquiring; as Skill in Languages, Hiſtory, Criticiſm, Arts, Sciences, and the like. Heaven will make all theſe uſeleſs. Nor can we, without ſomething greater and better, hope for Admiſſion there. And what ſhall we ſay of Riches, Honours, Titles and other Diſtinctions of a ſecular earthly Nature? Certainly, if Prophecy, Tongues, and inſpired Knowledge ſhall be done away; theſe ſhall, which are much inferior. Learn therefore to judge of Things according to their Value, and take your Eſtimate of them from their Duration. A Chriſtian ſhould account nothing great that terminates in this World. Methinks it looks mean and below the Dignity of our Profeſſion, to ſpeak of the World, and the Advantages of it with ſo much Guſt as is common: Calling the Proud happy, (as the Prophet expreſſes it) bleſſing the Covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth; praiſing Men when they do well for themſelves. This argues a Spirit carnal and earthly; and not under the deep Impreſſions of Eternity.

Cenſure yourſelves here, and get this Temper corrected. *We look not*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *at the Things which are ſeen.* Theſe Things ſhall be done away, ſhall ſhortly ceaſe, for ever ceaſe: And therefore look not at them. They are ſo far from deſerving our chief Care and Attention, that they do not deſerve a ſollicitous Thought. We ſhould ſcarce vouchſafe them a Glance but with great Indifferency. Endeavour and beg that it may be thus with you.

2. The Chriſtian may hence fetch Comfort under all the Afflictions which his preſent Imperfections and the Senſe thereof give him. As the good Things we are ſo apt to be taken with

and fond of ſhall be done away: So the evil Things, the Exerciſes and Grievances of the preſent Life, ſhall be done away alſo. When that which is perfect is come, all theſe Imperfections and the Complaints they occaſion ſhall ceaſe and end for ever. And as there is nothing that proves a greater Exerciſe to a real Chriſtian than the Senſe he has of the Weakneſs, Meanneſs of preſent Grace, and the low imperfect State of preſent Religion; he ſhould look forward to the State above, and follow himſelf with the Proſpect thereof. *When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part ſhall be done away*; and it will certainly come and ſoon come; ſo that your weeping will endure only for a Night, (this ſhort Night) Joy cometh in the Morning.

Your imperfect Knowledge ſhall ceaſe and be done away. The Glaſs will be laid aſide, and you will ſee Face to Face. Your love will be refined and exalted; freed from all Impurity and Droſs, and improved into a glorious vigorous Flame; all the Allays, Clogs and Imperfections of it ſhall be removed.

Your Imperfection in divine Worſhip, in all the Parts of Devotion ſhall be done away. Your Harps ſhall be ſtrung, and Hearts tuned for the Work of Praiſe, and for all other Parts of Religion, for Contemplation, Devotion and Action.

All Clouds in the Mind, and Damps in the Affections: Whatever narrows the Underſtanding, or fetters the Soul, ſhall ceaſe in the State of Perfection above. We ſhall think right, chuſe right, love and act right. The Faculties will be at Liberty, for their ſeveral Operations, ſhall feel themſelves eaſy and certain, and be able to exert themſelves in a manner agreeable to them.

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I might add, our Charity in Heaven ſhall be perfect. This is evident from the Text; for when he had ſaid Charity never fails, he immediately ſubjoins, that which is imperfect ſhall be done away; plainly implying that Charity as it ſhall not fail, ſo it ſhall be in a perfect State, which will be no ſmall Ingredient in our Happineſs. Was our Charity here rectified and compleat, nothing in this World could much annoy us. Perfect Charity would make an Advantage even of the Weakneſs and Infirmity of others. In Heaven it will be perfect, and conſequently will enable the Soul to feaſt upon all the Excellencies and Varieties of that State. Indeed ſuch is the Conſtitution of the human Mind, that it is impoſſible to be happy without Benevolence and Love: Nor can we be perfectly happy, whilſt there is any Defect in our Love.

In ſhort, the State above leaves out every thing that at preſent clogs and infeebles us, is all Perfection; Perfection of Knowledge, and every Grace, and conſequently entirely fitted for a full Happineſs. Let us often view this State, conſider it under this Character. All our Imperfections, the Source of preſent Troubles ſhall be done away; and they ſhall ſoon be done away. Think of this, Chriſtians, and rejoyce in the Proſpect. Comfort yourſelves with theſe Words.

CHAP. IV.

THE Apoſtle having glanced at the Perfection of the heavenly State, and ſignified that all our preſent Imperfections will ceaſe there. He proceeds to compare the two States; the Attainments and State of Heaven, with our Attainments and State here on Earth: And intimates the mighty

ty Difference between them; deſigning thereby to illuſtrate what he had ſaid, *viz.* that *when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part ſhall be done away*, and to ſhew the Reaſonableneſs of the Expectation that there will be ſuch an Improvement in the State of Things in the other World. To this Purpoſe

1. He brings in a Compariſon taken from Childhood and Manhood, inſinuating that the Difference between Heaven, (the Knowledge and other Attainments thereof) and our preſent State on Earth might be reſembled by the Difference there is between the State of a Child and a Man. *For when I was a Child, I ſpake as a Child, I underſtood as a Child, I thought as a Child; but when I became a Man, I put away childiſh Things*, ver. 11. q. d. as it is in the Caſe of a Child and a Man: The Man doth not think, nor underſtand, nor reaſon, as when he was a Child: But, his Faculties being ripened and improved, his Judgment, Inclination, Affections, his Diſcourſe, and manner of acting, are quite changed; and he lives another ſort of Life. So it is with Chriſtians here on Earth, and hereafter in Heaven.

The Apoſtle's direct Deſign is to compare the Perfection of Heaven with the Imperfection of Chriſtians in the preſent World: Borrowing a Simile or Reſemblance from the different Ages of Life, Childhood and Manhood, ſignifying that the Attainments of Chriſtians in Heaven, are as much above their Attainments whilſt on Earth; as the Knowledge, Wiſdom and other Attainments of a Man are above thoſe of a Child. This I ſuppoſe was his chief Deſign. But I cannot ſay he had nothing farther in View. He might intend to inſinuate not only that our State here and hereafter greatly differ in Perfection, like thoſe Ages;

Ages; but alſo, that they are fitly reſembled by them: That whilſt here we are but as Children, and that in Heaven we are Men. And thus I ſhall conſider the Words. Nor do I apprehend I ſhall put any great Force upon them, when I obſerve from them, that our State on Earth is a State of *Minority* and *Childhood*, compared with the State above, which is a State of *Maturity* and *Manhood*. In the one we ſpeak as a Child, underſtand as a Child, and think as a Child; in the other, we put away childiſh Things.

I ſhall handle the Subject in the following Method. (1.) I ſhall conſider the preſent State as a State of Minority and Childhood; and ſhew in what Reſpects it is ſo. And, (2.) Conſider the Maturity and Manhood of the State above, in which childiſh Things are put away.

I. I ſhall conſider the preſent State as a State of Minority and Childhood, and ſhew in what Reſpects it is ſo. I ſhall confine myſelf to the Inſtances the Apoſtle mentions here. We ſpeak as Children, underſtand as Children, and think as Children.

1. Whilſt in this World we ſpeak as a Child. And every one knoweth the Infirmity with which Children ſpeak. Their Language is generally broken and imperfect. They rather liſp than ſpeak; eſpecially Children of the Age the Word here uſed ſeems to import, νήπιοι a kind of Infants that can ſcarce form and pronounce Words. And ſuch are we, even the wiſeſt and beſt of us, compared with the Saints above. We do but ſtammer in all our Language, and ſpeak as Children. To explain and illuſtrate this a little.

We do ſo with reſpect to *the Works of Nature*. There are, I doubt not, a great many *Errata* and Blunders in the moſt admired Syſtems of the

greateſt Philoſophers. We have ſeen one Age correcting another: One Hypotheſis and Scheme built upon the Ruins of another: And we need not queſtion the Light of the future World will diſcover great Defects in all of them. The Caſe here is much the ſame as that of *Job* and his three Friends. The good Man ſpoke more juſtly and honourably of God and his Works than the reſt; but when it pleaſed God to challenge him, and to come forth as a Diſputant (if you will allow the Expreſſion) he reproves him for his Raſhneſs, and for *darkening Counſel by Words without Knowledge*, Job xxxviii. 2. Some of the Philoſophers have refined upon others: The *Ariſtotelians* upon the *Epicureans*; the *Carteſians* upon both; and the *Newtonians* upon all. I am not ſure that further Light in this World will not raiſe a new Hypotheſis. I cannot doubt however but the Light of another World will ſhew Errors in the beſt, and convince us that in this Inſtance (as well as others) we ſpeak as a Child.

And the ſame may be ſaid of the *Works of Providence*, of Subjects of Divinity, and of a Multitude of Queſtions and Controverſies; too many to be here enumerated, that have buſied inquiſitive Men and filled their Volumes.

I may add, we ſpeak as a Child when we are ſpeaking to God, as well as of him. Our Devotion has a great deal of Weakneſs in it. And though ſome ſpeak the Language of Heaven better than others: Addreſs themſelves to God, and converſe with him, with more Light, Life and Fervour; yet our beſt Performances are but inſipid, low and faint, compared with the Devotion above.

When I was a Child, ſays the Apoſtle, *I ſpake as a Child*. And this is our common Condition

as long as we are in the Body. But as the Reason of this is afterwards hinted, when it is ſaid, *I thought as a Child*, I ſhall not further enlarge here, but refer it to that Place where I ſhall again touch the Subject.

2. As we *ſpeak*, ſo we *underſtand as a Child*; or, as the Word more properly ſignifies, have the Mind and Affections of Children, ἐφρόνυν, it refers to the Inclination rather than Judgment, and notes the Purſuits of Children; their Affection to, and minding little and childiſh Things, as we call Things of no Worth. And this is our Caſe in the preſent State. Our Care and Studies, our Ambition and Zeal, are very much employed (like Children) in Purſuit of Baubles, Matters of little Importance; and which, compared with the Enjoyments of another World, the Things they are taken up with in Heaven, are as low and mean as Children's Toys are, compared with the higher Things that engage the Attention of a more mature Age.

I might ſhew this in ſeveral Particulars: But will inſtance only in two ſorts of Things in general; the Things of this World, and Things of preſent Religion. We often ſhew the Minds and Affections of Children, and act as Children, in both theſe Claſſes or Kinds of Things.

1. We frequently act the Child with reſpect to the Things of this World: As when we rejoice in them, ſet our Affections upon them; as if they were our Happineſs or any conſiderable Part, or Ingredient therein. It argues, you know, a weak and childiſh Mind to be elevated and highly pleaſed with Baubles. And of this Nature are moſt of the Things here below we are apt to be flattered with. What we call Riches, a great Eſtate, Titles of Honour and Diſtinction,

tinction, a white Staff, the Garter, the Star, the Sceptre, are but like Childrens Toys; compared with the glorious Objects they are entertained with in Heaven. And tho' they are apt ſtrangely to dazzle our Eyes, and ſtrike our Minds; they cannot bear the more ſevere and manly Judgment of the other State.

Not but theſe Things are valuable: What we ſhould be thankful for, and may improve to good Purpoſe. They are valuable and good for us when we rightly underſtand their Nature, and keep them in their Place; refer and uſe them right. But when we are fond of them, and reſt in them, and are ready to cry out with the Fool in the Goſpel, when his Ground brought forth plentifully, *Soul take thy Eaſe; eat, drink and be merry*, we abuſe both them and ourſelves; we then play the Child, diſcover childiſh Sentiments and a childiſh Mind; for really he is as much a Child that hugs a Bag of Money, as he that plays with a Hobby-Horſe; and, I think, it muſt be granted, the older taller Child is more a Child than the other. So when we immoderately purſue theſe Things, are perfect Drudges in the World, and for the World; riſe up early, and ſit up late; eat the Bread of Careſulneſs and Sorrow: This is often done in a Manner and for Purpoſes, that even our Neighbours that ſtand by and look on, can give no reaſonable Account of our Conduct. And what they in Heaven think of it you may gueſs. There is the like Childiſhneſs in our Behaviour when we paſſionately reſent every little Diſappointment in the World; like that weak and childiſh Idolater, Michah, *Ye have taken away my Gods, and what have I more?* Judg. xviii. 24. O how do we ſhame and diſgrace ourſelves in this reſpect? Suffering our Paſſions to be engaged about theſe

low minute Things; triumphing in Shadows, and grieving when they vaniſh: Juſt like a Child whom you may obſerve ſometimes weeping over a broken Baby.

Thus do we *underſtand as a Child*, (as we render it) *i. e.* for ſo the original imports, are childiſhly minded; eſteem, love and purſue Things as Children. And though we may think otherwiſe of them in the preſent State of Childhood; yet when we become Men, and put away childiſh Things, we ſhall have truer Sentiments. Could you conſult the Angels upon the Subject, or the Saints in Heaven that have paſſed through our World; you would find they look down upon many of the Things we doat ſo much upon, with the ſame contemptuous Smile and Neglect, as Men do here upon a Child's Collection of Gewgaws, and little Trifles.

Let us conſider this, and endeavour to correct our Spirit and Temper. Something of the Child, I grant, we ſhall carry about with us as long as we are in the Body. But we ſhould not be all Child, as we are whilſt we ſet our Hearts, and confine our Affections to theſe Things, without aſpiring after ſomething greater and better.

2. Another Claſs of Things in which our childiſh Temper, in this Inſtance of it, ſhews itſelf, is the Things of Religion. We are very prone here to childiſh Things, ſet them in a wrong Place, and give them a wrong Name; call that Religion which is not Religion, and ſo fall down and worſhip the Image we ourſelves have formed. The *Phariſees* of old are cenſured by our Lord as ſadly guilty in this Particular. They were mighty ſtrict in ſome little inconſiderable Matters, eſpecially ſuch as were of their own Invention: But groſs Libertines in points of the moſt Importance.

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They *tythed Mint, Anniſe and Cummin*; whilſt they *neglected the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy and Faith.* And this has been the Bane and Ruin of Religion ever ſince; not only in many Churches, and large Bodies of Men; but among Hypocrites in every Community. Their Zeal often runs out upon nice and curious Queſtions, Forms and Modes of Worſhip: Things not only remote from the Foundation; but comparatively of no Conſequence to the real Intereſt of Souls: Like Children buſying themſelves about Trifles. How do our Brethren above pity us, (we may ſuppoſe) in theſe Circumſtances, and whilſt they behold us under the Diſadvantages of ſuch a Temper: Eſpecially, (as is often the Caſe) when good Men are teaſing one another, and ready to conſume one another in the Fire of Contention? How do we often fall out about Baubles; as our Friends in the other World, that have arrived at the State of Manhood, juſtly eſteem many of the Subjects of our Diſputes? And how do they compaſſionate us? or ſmile at us, as we do at Children, when we ſee them commence Quarrels one againſt another, for that which does not deſerve a ſerious Thought? Indeed the Inſtances are innumerable of our childiſh Sentiments in theſe Matters; I mean, which will be found ſo, when we come to look back, and paſs a Judgment upon them in the Light of the other World. Something we may diſcern at preſent: But ſhall receive a fuller Conviction hereafter.

The Religion of the Church of *Rome* one would think contrived on purpoſe to repreſent the Childiſhneſs of Devotion. And though others may have laid aſide many of their Fopperies; a great deal of the Child ſtill abides with them, in their

Judgment about Religion; in their Eſtimation of Things relating to it: Over-rating what is true; putting Falſhood for Truth; and in their whole Conduct and Behaviour in their Religion. This a judicious Obſerver may ſee now; and all will ſee more fully when they become Men, and have put away childiſh Things.

3. Another Inſtance in the Text is, that we *think as a Child*, i. e. reaſon and judge about Things in a childiſh Manner: For ſo the Word ſignifies. And this gives a Reaſon of both the former. We ſpeak as a Child, and are childiſhly minded, becauſe we think as a Child. Did we know better the Nature of Things, we ſhould ſpeak of them more juſtly, and value them more truly; ſhould not blunder ſo much either in our Judgments, or Diſcourſes. We think as a Child: And hereupon love, chuſe, act as a Child, and run into a Multitude of Miſtakes in our Affections and Purſuits. To illuſtrate this in a few Words.

A Child judges of Things by Appearance; by the outſide, without conſidering the real intrinſic Worth. A gilded Counter, you know, is of as much Value with a Child, as the pureſt Gold. And the ſame Childiſhneſs there often is in our Judgment of Things in the preſent State. We ſuffer ourſelves to be cheated with the Luſtre of worldly Things; as Riches, Honours, pompous Titles and Diſtinctions: Though they are moſtly a falſe Appearance; have little ſolid in them; little that concerns our true Happineſs, or can contribute to the Satisfaction of our Minds. Nor do we only thus judge of Things, but of Men too; not according to their real Excellency and Worth, but according to their outward Advantages. And ſuch is our Infirmity that we often

often ſtoop as low as gay Cloathing and Equipage: Though theſe add no more to the Man than Trappings to an Aſs. Thus vain and childiſh are we in our Imaginations. The greateſt part of Mankind look no further than theſe Things; have no Senſe of Excellency beyond them: And even ſuch as in ſome Meaſure ſee into the Vanity of them, are apt to be too much taken with them.

Again, a Child judges haſtily and raſhly; doth not deliberate and examin before he pronounces concerning Things. The Reaſon was hinted before: He is carried away with the firſt Appearance. In which Reſpect alſo, it may be ſaid of us, that we think as a Child. Our Hatred and Love, our Averſion and Purſuit, are frequently grounded upon no ſolid and competent Judgment. A ſmall Circumſtance in a Thing or Perſon preſently pleaſes us, and gains us over to the Intereſt thereof: When if we were better apprized of the Subject, had Patience to look a little further, come near and judged more cloſely, our Judgment would be truer, and Conduct wiſer. Nor is it a little that we ſuffer by this Weakneſs and Infirmity, thus thinking as a Child.

And then in Conſequence of the other Particulars juſt mentioned, a Child often judges falſly. The Appearance of Things, and his haſte in judging, deceive him. And thus it is with us, even the beſt and moſt cautious of us, in a great many Inſtances.

When I was a Child, ſays the Apoſtle, I thought or reaſoned as a Child; and you obſerve I am ſuppoſing that this is our Condition, more or leſs, in the preſent World. We are a ſort of Minors and Children, and think as Children. I might ſhew this at large. We think and reaſon

as a Child in natural Things. The greateſt Proficients, the moſt accompliſhed Students in theſe Subjects. are but a ſort of childiſh Philoſophers. And though ſome have penetrated deeper than others; enriched and gratified the learned World with fine Diſcoveries; yet, no queſtion, it will appear hereafter, that theſe moſt finiſhed Schemes were but a rough Draught, the Out-lines of a good Syſtem; and which needs not only many Additions, but Corrections.

Further, We think as a Child in ſpiritual Things. Something we know of God and Religion (know truly and certainly) and ſo much as is ſufficient to ground our preſent Faith, and direct our preſent Practice. But there is much more that we know not; and what we know we know but imperfectly. Many of our Comments on divine Subjects; on the Nature and Attributes of God, the Perſon and Offices of Chriſt, the Works of Providence on Scripture Revelation, and eſpecially the more deep and myſterious Doctrines of it; many of theſe will be found ſtrangely defective, and many groſly erroneous.

I need ſcarcely add, that the ſame may be concluded concerning heavenly Things: That in theſe we think and reaſon as Children. They are indeed more out of View than others; and conſequently, we may be ſuppoſed to be more at a Loſs in our Conceptions and Thoughts concerning them.

In a Word, here we know but in part; at beſt we ſee but through a Glaſs darkly. And as we ſee darkly, we often ſee falſly and judge falſly. This may be affirmed both with reſpect to natural, ſpiritual and heavenly Things. No doubt many of our Concluſions here will be reverſed hereafter. Many of the Volumes which now fill

our

our Libraries, and which we ſet a great Value on, will with thoſe above be looked upon as childiſh and worſe than waſte Paper. They will paſs the ſame Judgment upon them that a wiſe and experienced Man does upon the poor Reaſonings of a Child.

And thus I have conſidered the preſent State as a State of Minority, in which we ſpeak as a Child, underſtand as a Child, and think as a Child. I am now

2. To conſider the Maturity and Manhood of the State above, in which childiſh Things are put away. *When I became a Man I put away childiſh Things.* In Heaven we ſhall be as Men and put away childiſh Things. I ſhall not ſtand to purſue this Head at large. Something of the ſame Kind will occur afterwards: And therefore I ſhall but briefly touch it here.

In the other World we ſhall arrive at Maturity in Knowledge. I begin with that, becauſe it is the Foundation of all the reſt. We ſhall put away all childiſh Conceptions; ſhall blunder no more in the dark; but think and reaſon about Things (all ſort of Things that our improved Minds and enlarged Faculties ſhall be converſant with) juſtly, truly and diſtinctly.

In the other World, we ſhall be Men in Underſtanding and Judgment: We ſhall know the Value and Worth of Things, and accordingly rate them. Every Thing will appear as it is; and be loved as it deſerves. We ſhall no more be decoyed with falſe Appearances to our Hurt or Damage; nor taken with ſpecious Gloſſes. All Childiſhneſs of this kind will be put away. We ſhall then underſtand as Men; (φρονεῖν) eſteem and mind Things according to their real inward Value: Which one Circumſtance is enough

to

to make a wiſe Man (ſenſible how much he is abuſed here below) long for a Diſmiſſion.

And then we ſhall ſpeak as Men, and act as Men: Not only think juſtly, reaſon juſtly, chuſe well and wiſely; but converſe and act according to the rules of perfect Wiſdom and Juſtice. There will be no fooliſh, childiſh Purſuits of the little Vanities that here weary and vex us: No childiſh petty Quarrels among the Saints and good Men there: Nothing mean in any Part of their Conduct: But an entire Decorum and Decency, in all they ſay and do. When I became a Man, ſays the Apoſtle, I put away childiſh Things. And this we ſhall all do in Heaven. But to proceed.

II. The Apoſtle goes on with his Subject, and farther compares the two States in Point of Knowledge, and the manner thereof: Illuſtrating, and clearing what he had before hinted. *For now we ſee through a Glaſs darkly; but then Face to Face. Now I know in part, but then ſhall I know even as alſo I am known*, ver. 12. In which Words we have our *preſent* Manner of Knowledge compared with our *future*.

1. We have an Account of the preſent Manner of our Knowledge. It is *through a Glaſs*, *darkly* and *in part*.

Through a Glaſs. It is not eaſy to determin what kind of a Glaſs the Apoſtle intends. Underſtand it of what we call a Looking-Glaſs, and the meaning is that we have only a Glimpſe of Things: Do not ſo much ſee Things themſelves as the Images; ſome faint Reflection or Appearance of them; and conſequently we have but a very imperfect View compared with what we ſhall have in Heaven.

Dr. *Hammond* takes it in this Senſe, and thus paraphraſes the Words, "Now our Viſion is

"very

" very dark and imperfect: Looking at Things " as when they are ſhewed us through a Glaſs, " on purpoſe to give us but a Glimpſe of them. " But when we come to Heaven we ſhall ſee " Things as perfectly as if we looked cloſe to " them." Some think the Apoſtle intends a reading Glaſs, or what we call Spectacles; the Deſign of which is to Help the weak Eye. And again, others underſtand the Expreſſion of a Proſpective Glaſs, which ſhews Things at a Diſtance, and conſequently but obſcurely. However we take it, it is evident, it ſignifies to us, the Weakneſs of our preſent Sight, and the Imperfection of our preſent Knowledge.

And as we ſee through a Glaſs, ſo *darkly* ἐν αἰνίγματι, in a Riddle (as the Word imports) which being a Speech involved in Ambiguity, in doubtful, uncertain Terms; intimates the ſame Thing concerning our Viſion: That it is not clear and diſtinct, but dark and obſcure,

It is added, now I know in part, *i. e.* ſome Things, not all: Or ſomething about Things; not Things themſelves, at leaſt, not fully. And you may obſerve the Apoſtle changes the Number here. In the former Clauſe it is, *we ſee thro' a Glaſs*, &c. Here it is, *I know in part*, &c. Which, it may be, is done with Deſign, that none might think he accepted himſelf, and his own Caſe; when he ſpeaks ſo much of the great Imperfection of the preſent Knowledge. Though he had ſome extraordinary Advantages, was caught up to the Third Heaven, and heard unſpeakable Words there: Though he knew more than many others, yet he owns he knew but in part. And indeed, the more any are illuminated, the richer Treaſure they have of intellectual Furniture; the more humble they ſee Reaſon to be. The great-

eſt

eſt and wiſeſt know but in part: And ordinarily the more Knowledge they have, the greater their Senſe of their Ignorance.

2. We have in the Words the Manner of our future Knowledge, that of the other State and World. *Then* we ſhall ſee *Face to Face:* Which notes the Intimacy and Nearneſs of our Viſion. We ſhall not need a Glaſs to give us the Image of Things: For we ſhall ſee Things themſelves, or to bring the diſtant Object nearer, or yet to aſſiſt the Faculty of ſeeing. But all Things being placed in a true Light: Our Knowledge of them will be diſtinct and clear.

It follows, *then ſhall I know, even as alſo I am known:* Which, being placed in Oppoſition to knowing in part, muſt imply a full Knowledge of Things. *Know as I am known,* i. e. know God and divine Things with as much Certainty as God knows me. Not with equal Comprehenſion, but with like Clearneſs: So as that no Heſitation or Doubt ſhall remain concerning the Objects of Knowledge. Or know as I am taught; more fully taught and inſtructed in that World; (So *Beza*) which implies that Knowledge will be perfect, and the teaching and Inſtruction ſuch as will perfect it; otherwiſe it had not been diſtinguiſhed from that which is in part. Now we know in part, and but in part: But then we ſhall know as we are known; as God knows us and the reſt of his Works. Or know more fully, having a more glorious Light communicated to us; according to which manner of teaching will be our Improvement in Knowledge. And hence it is eaſy to obſerve, *that there is a very great Difference between the Manner of our Knowledge in this State and the after State.* I ſhall not purſue this Propoſition at large, and conſider all ſuppoſeable

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Differences between our preſent and future Knowledge: But keep to the Particulars in the Text; compare our Knowledge here with our Knowledge hereafter, in the Inſtances the Apoſtle ſuggeſts. And I reckon there are three Things here implied, in which our preſent and future Knowledge are compared, and in which future Knowledge has the Preference. Our preſent Knowledge is dark and uncertain; the Knowledge of Heaven will be clear and certain: Preſent Knowledge is in part, the Knowledge of Heaven is more intire and full: Preſent Knowledge is attended with labour, the Knowledge of Heaven will be eaſy and intuitive.

1. Preſent Knowledge is dark and uncertain; future Knowledge certain and clear. I might illuſtrate both Parts of this Aſſertion in moſt of the great Objects of our Enquiry and Knowledge; and ſhew how mightily the Knowledge of Heaven exceeds that on Earth in this Reſpect.

We now know God himſelf but very darkly and confuſedly. That there is a God, a Being of eternal, neceſſary Exiſtence, and abſolute Perfection, is demonſtrable. But after all, what obſcure Notions have we of this Matter? The very Idea and Notion of an eternal Being; (a neceſſary Being that always was the ſame, never derived from another, never began to be; but always was neceſſarily and unchangeably what he i·) the Notion, I ſay, of ſuch a Being is too great for our Faculties; as the moſt thoughtful Perſons find. We are convinced there muſt be ſuch a Being; and yet the Idea of it almoſt overwhelms and confounds the Mind. But in Heaven we ſhall ſee Face to Face; the Matter will be clear and evident, admit of no Doubt, nor be attended with any Difficulty.

We now know the Attributes and Perfections of God: His Unity, Omniſcience, Omnipreſence, infinite Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs, *&c.* And ſome learned Men have undertaken a Demonſtration of theſe, in which they have employed the utmoſt force of human Reaſon: And though they have ſucceeded ſo well, that moſt acquieſce in their Arguments; yet others object, and think them not concluſive; and all find Difficulties in them: So juſtly may we apply that of the Apoſtle here; that now we ſee through a Glaſs darkly. But in Heaven we ſhall ſee Face to Face: See the divine Perfections ſhining in their Luſtre, and never more entertain a Doubt concerning them; or have any Error or Miſtake about them.

In ſhort, we know ſomething of God in this World; partly by the Light of Nature, and partly by the Light of Scripture. But there is an Imperfection in both. The former is like the Stars twinkling at Night: The other like the Moon ſhining more brightly. But the Knowledge of Heaven (called here ſeeing Face to Face) is like the Sun ſhining in its Meridian Strength.

Further, our Knowledge of the bleſſed Jeſus and of the Holy Ghoſt, the other Perſons in the glorious Trinity, is of the ſame Nature; and is but like ſeeing through a Glaſs darkly. One needs no other Argument to prove this than the many Controverſies that have been raiſed upon the Subject: About the Perſon and Nature of Chriſt, the Diſtinction, Relation and Nature of the ſeveral divine Perſons in the Trinity. There is an Intricacy and Darkneſs in theſe Things; otherwiſe learned Men had never been ſo much divided in their Opinions about them. And I reckon I may affirm, that thoſe who have thought moſt

cloſely on theſe Heads find the moſt ſenſible Conviction of this Truth, that now we ſee through a Glaſs darkly. But in Heaven we ſhall ſee Face to Face: Theſe great Points will be unravelled, and the Myſtery of them laid open; ſo far, at leaſt, as is neceſſary and fit; and ſo far as our Happineſs requires, and the Meaſure of our Capacities will admit.

The ſame may be ſaid of the Works of God: of philoſophical Inquiries; of the Laws of Nature in our Syſtem: What other Syſtems and Worlds there are! and how repleniſhed? and of a multitude of Queſtions relating to Divinity, and Scripture Revelation. When we come to ſee Face to Face, get near the Object, and behold it more cloſely, our former Darkneſs and Uncertainty will vaniſh, the Glaſs ſhall be laid aſide, and we ſhall ſee Things (as it were) with the naked Eye. So that there will be no more blundering in the Dark; no more Suſpenſe of Judgment about Things, (as here is often the Caſe, eſpecially with the more modeſt Enquirers;) no more Error or Miſtake about them.

2. Preſent Knowledge is imperfect; future Knowledge full and compleat. *Now we know in part, and then ſhall know as* we are *known.* If it be thought that the Phraſe (knowing as we are known) doth not import this; that we ſhall know fully: I have two Things to ſay: That the Oppoſition in the Text requires that we ſhould thus underſtand it: And then (if it be neceſſary) we may take in the other Criticiſm of *Beza*; we ſhall know as we are further inſtructed and made to know. The Senſe, no queſtion, is, that as preſent Knowledge is in part, future Knowledge ſhall be compleat.

Our

Our Knowledge here is in part in two Reſpects, but in part in Regard of the Extent of it: And tho' it is granted that in Heaven it will not be infinite, but have its Bounds and Limits; yet it will be far more extenſive than now it is, and take in a vaſt Compaſs of Objects that at preſent are not within its Verge and Reach. How little a part do we know of this World? and how almoſt nothing of the other? Comparatively indeed ſome are more knowing than others. But when the Compariſon is made between that World and this, all are ignorant here.

And then our Knowledge here is in part with Reſpect to the Degree of it. The Things we do know we have not a Comprehenſion of: We only know ſomething of them; but do not know them fully. So that that Maxim of the Philoſopher, *nihil ſcitur*, has not ſo much of Scepticiſm in it as may appear at firſt ſight. In Heaven our Knowledge will take in a great many more Objects: and then it will go deeper; penetrate more into every Object.

In this World we know our ſelves but in part: and indeed nothing of our ſelves but in part. In Heaven a great many Things, now above us and unintelligible, will appear clear and in open Light. We ſhall underſtand the Philoſophy of the human Soul better than now we do: its Nature, Faculties and Powers; how it was united to a Body, and what the Laws of its Union and Operations: all which at preſent are Myſtery to us.

We ſhall better underſtand the Scheme of divine Providence; and be able to ſolve the Difficulties of it, which now ſo much puzzle us: particularly, the ſeeming unequal Diſtributions of Providence; the Adverſity of good Men, and the Proſperity of bad: *Wherefore do the Wicked live*, ſaith

ſaith *Job*, *become old, are mighty in Power*, Chap. xxi. 7. *Wherefore looke ſt thou upon them that deal treacherouſly, and holde ſt thy Tongue, when the Wicked devoureth the Man that is more righteous than he*, Habb. i. 13. Theſe are Queſtions that have often been the Exerciſe of good Men; as is plain from their Complaints and Expoſtulations in Scripture. And though I do not ſay they are not capable of a competent Anſwer now; yet the full Reſolution of them remains to the other World. Then we ſhall more fully ſee *the End of the Lord*, as it is remarked concerning *Job*'s Tryals, *James* xv. 11. What End he had in bringing his Servants under ſuch a Diſcipline as is often their Lot, and continuing them under it the greateſt part of their Life. Why ſuch Men as *Nero* are raiſed to be Emperors of the World; whilſt at the ſame time ſuch Men as the Apoſtles are made the Filth of the World and Off-ſcouring of all Things.

Further. The Harmony of Providence, with Scripture, will, I ſuppoſe, appear in the other World, in a moſt glorious manner, and ſo as to afford the higheſt Entertainment to the Saints. Something of this is now evident to the Inquiſitive, eſpecially in Regard of ſuch Paſſages of the Word of God as concern the interior Life, the various Caſes of Chriſtians; their Infirmities, Exerciſes, Conflicts, Fears, Victories, and Succeſſes, the Methods of divine Conduct towards them *&c.* But alas! we know but in part. We are often at a *non-plus*, and do not know how to reconcile this or that Phænomenon and Scene of Providence to Revelation; and to ſhew how the Scripture is fulfilled in the ſeveral Events of Providence. But in Heaven I queſtion not but this will be done to Satisfaction: and the Satisfaction

will be ſo great as to be almoſt ſufficient, of itſelf, to make an Heaven.

I may add, the Plan and Scheme of our Redemption, the Method that God has choſen of ſaving Sinners by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, will then be comprehended. Now we know in part, know ſomething of it; but then we ſhall know it more fully: and all the deep Speculations and Queſtions about it will be out of queſtion, (if you will allow the Expreſſion.) We ſhall then know not only how the Word was made Fleſh; but why: what the λόγος or Word (as St. *John* calls him) was that was united to a human Body, what the human Soul, what the Perſon of the Mediator, and what the Reaſon of this extraordinary Diſpenſation. In a Word: a wonderful Scene of Light and Knowledge will open in the other World, which will make no ſmall part of the Happineſs of the bleſſed Inhabitants. Such Diſpenſations of Providence and Grace that concern this World we know but in part, and 'tis ſtill a leſs part we know of the State and Oeconomy of that World. But in Heaven all will be unveiled: we ſhall know as we are known; as we know one another; any Objects that are neareſt to us, and that we daily converſe with; or as God knows us; not with the like Comprehenſion; but with a Meaſure of Certainty and Clearneſs that reſembles his Knowledge: ſhall know the Things of our World, and the Church in it; and the Things of the heavenly World, and the Church there: what the Angels are; what their Offices and Employment; what their Order and Government; what the Thrones of the Saints; what their Hallelujahs, the Tune and Manner of their Anthems and Songs. Theſe Subjects we ſee through a Glaſs darkly, but then we ſhall ſee Face to Face, and know even as

we are known. Don't ſay this is a Strain of Speculation of little Importance. For though I grant there are other Matters that may appear more nearly to concern us; yet we ſhould not think theſe Things nothing to us in this World, that will ſo much employ us in the other.

3. Our preſent Knowledge is laborious; attended with a great deal of Difficulty and Pains: our Knowledge in Heaven will be eaſy, and, as it were, by Intuition. The Text implies this, when it ſaith, we now ſee through a Glaſs *darkly*, (enigmatically) but hereafter Face to Face. Moſt of our Knowledge in this World is attained in a diſcurſive Way, by Study and Reaſoning. As we diſcern Objects through a Glaſs employed to reflect the Images of Things, or to aſſiſt and ſtrengthen the Sight; ſo we know by the Help of proper Mediums. We firſt receive general Notions and Principles, and from thence make Inferences and Deductions, and ſo at laſt acquire a ſmall Stock of Knowledge; which is all the Treaſure we can pretend to. But in Heaven our Knowledge will be of another kind; we ſhall know Things not by Reaſon, but by Intuition; ſee Face to Face: every Object will appear to the naked Eye, and the Faculty preſently graſp it.

Some Things we know in this manner in the preſent State: For Inſtance; what we call Maxims or ſelf-evident Truths; as that the whole is greater than a part; or that two and two make four; that three and two are equal to five. No Man needs any Proof of theſe Things: nor indeed are they capable of Proof. The Light and Evidence in which they ſtand is greater than that of any Arguments that can be brought for their Proof. And thus it will be, I preſume, in Heaven. And the Apoſtle, I think, ſignifies it when

he tells us that we ſhall ſee Face to Face. Thro' what a Claſs and Chain of Arguments muſt we paſs to prove any one Point of Divinity in this dark World; even the moſt fundamental Points of all; as that there is a God, that the Soul is immortal, that there is a future State, that Spirits exiſt, that there are Angels, and human Minds diſtinct from Body or Matter. The Demonſtration of theſe Things hath a Nicety and Difficulty in it, that ſome Mens Prejudices, and others Sloth, cannot ſurmount. And after all, the Evidence is of that Nature that it requires a good deal of Attention to keep it in View. I dare appeal to the thinking part of Mankind, whether it be not ſo. Now among the Advantages of Heaven, this is one, and not the leaſt conſiderable; that our Knowledge of divine Things will be eaſy. We ſhall not have the Objects of our Religion to prove: but every one of them will ſtand before our Eyes in a clear, diſtinct, and ſtrong Light. Thus we ſhall know God: know every Attribute and Perfection of the divine Nature: know the Lord Jeſus; ſee him as he is. And the ſame may be ſaid of every other Subject of divine Knowledge. The whole Syſtem of Truth; natural or ſupernatural Truth; the whole Body of Philoſophy and Divinity will be then expounded; expoſed to the naked Eye, ſo as to need no farther Comment. We ſhall then ſee Face to Face: not by Deduction and Inference, but intuitively.

Thus I have explained the Text. I mean I have attempted ſomething to that Purpoſe: not queſtioning but I need the favourable Allowance the Words themſelves afford; that here we ſee as through a Glaſs darkly, and ſpeak as a Child; and conſequently but very imperfectly, eſpecially about ſuch divine Subjects. I ſhall now

now ſubjoin two Reflections upon what has been ſaid.

1. Methinks there is ſomething mortifying and very humbling in the preſent Truths. At beſt, whilſt in this World we are but a ſort of Children and Minors. We often indeed look big in our own Imaginations; talk of great Men and wiſe Men; and are too apt to put our ſelves into that Number. But they in Heaven think otherwiſe of us and our Affairs. And indeed our beſt Attainments have ſo much Imperfection and Weakneſs in them at preſent, as ſhould abaſe us. And then how exceeding weak and childiſh are they that appear fond of the loweſt Things of this childiſh State: ſuch as Gaiety in Dreſs and Furniture, a finer Coat than their Neighbours: This is to act the Child literally, and ſhews a Weakneſs far more criminal than that of a Child in his Purſuits. O what Cauſe have we to be humbled in a State of ſo much Infirmity!

Beſides, is our Knowledge in the preſent World in ſuch a Condition as has been repreſented? Certainly we ought not to be elated and puffed up with any imaginary Conceits of high Attainments. We know but confuſedly; know but in part; and indeed it is ſo little we know, compared with what we do not know, and compared with what they know above, that we can ſcarce run into a greater Indecency than to be proud of our poor Scantling. And this is aggravated when we ſet up for Dictators to all about us: whether in Matters of natural Science and Knowledge, or Revelation. It ill becomes ſuch Children as we, that know ſo little, ſo darkly and confuſedly, to be over confident of our own Notions and Speculations, eſpecially in Doctrines and Subjects of great Subtilty; that are two nice or too deep for us. Was an Angel from

Heaven, or one of the Spirits of the Juſt, to catechiſe a Virtuoſo, or evén a Council of Divines, how ſoon would they be nonpluſſed?

O let us remember where we are, and what we are! and learn every Man not to think of himſelf more highly than he ought, but to think ſoberly; and whilſt we are in the dark, not aſſume too much to our ſelves and impoſe upon others. We know as much as is neceſſary to direct us in our Duty. The Light we have is ſufficient to ſhew us the way to Heaven. But we ſhould take care not to juſtle and quarrel with one another in the way, eſpecially about Things that our preſent Imperfection and Darkneſs makes uncertain to us and them.

'Tis not improbable but the Apoſtle by thus reducing Mankind; repreſenting them (even the higheſt and greateſt of them) in a State of Minority and Childhood, deſigned to humble the *Corinthians*, who were apt to be puffed up with their Gifts, and particularly their Knowledge. He not only tells them that their Gifts would profit them nothing without Charity; that they would ſoon ceaſe and fail: but that their greateſt Light and Knowledge was but Darkneſs and Confuſion compared with that of the future State. And thus it is with us, with all of us. Let us therefore walk humbly and modeſtly: be thankful for what we know, and eſpecially for that Light from above that ſhines in the dark Place of this World: but not over-value our Knowledge, and think we know what we do not. And then,

2. How glorious a State will Heaven be? and how much ſhould we deſire it? *Truly the Light is ſweet*, ſays *Solomon, and 'tis a pleaſant thing for the Eye to behold the Sun*, Eccleſ. xi. 7. Intellectual Light is ſo, (eminently ſo.) There is no greater Entertainment to an inquiſitive Mind than the

Search

Search and Diſcovery of Truth. How have ſome been tranſported with their εὕρηκα (I have found it, I have found it) when employed in the Study of natural Things?

Well Heaven is a World of Light and Truth. There we ſhall ſee Face to Face, and know as we are known; know more Things: Know all the Things we know more fully. And which adds exceedingly to the Satisfaction, know them eaſily and by Intuition. All the great Objects of our Knowledge will lye open before us; our Minds will have a ready Acceſs to them; and conſtantly feaſt upon an infinite Variety of Pleaſure reſulting from thence.

O let us wait and prepare for that World! where we ſhall find what we are now ſeeking. Meet every divine Subject diſplayed in all its Beauties, and fitted for our higheſt Entertainment. Be often looking to that State, ſaying with the Apoſtle, *I deſire to depart and be with Chriſt, which is far better.* I have often thought that ſuch as appear fond of Knowledge, cannot take a more direct Way to it than by applying themſelves in good earneſt to the Study and Practice of Religion. That is really the beſt *Univerſity*, as it tends to fit them for the World of perfect Knowledge above. Nor will any ſuffer by their Religion in this Reſpect. For ſhould their Zeal in the ſerious Part of it hinder any Advances in the more pompous Part of Learning (ſo apt to miniſter to Vanity) the Loſs will be abundantly made up hereafter. Such a Courſe ſecures Heaven where they will be Scholars, perfect Scholars at once. In ſhort, endeavour to think of that World as a State of great Preferment: And think of thoſe that you have Reaſon to hope are got to it with due Honour. Don't ſpeak of them as if they

were loſt, becauſe out of our World: He is dead, poor Man; as if Death was his undoing. An Expreſſion that affronts all the great Principles of our Religion and Hope. We ſhould conſider that we are in a poor, low, dark State; that we are Children and Minors; and that they, who are above, are arrived to a State of Maturity, and Manhood, and Perfection; ſpeak as Men, underſtand as Men, and think as Men; have put away our childiſh Things, and are ſeeing Face to Face, and accordingly enjoying. O let us endeavour to keep up a juſt Opinion of that World, to refer to it as the State, the only State of our Happineſs; in the mean Time to be ſenſible of the Lowneſs and Meanneſs of our preſent State; that we may think of Death not only with Patience, but Pleaſure; rejoyce at the Proſpect of putting off the Body, and getting into the ſeparate State: Where, among other Things, (all inviting) we ſhall be above preſent Darkneſs and Weakneſs; in his Light ſee Light, ſee Face to Face, and know even as we are known.

CHAP. V.

THE Apoſtle, in the Concluſion of his whole Diſcourſe in this Chapter, evidently keeps his general Deſign in View; which was to extol the Grace of Charity. *And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, theſe three; but the greateſt of theſe is Charity*, ver. 13.

In the 8th ver. he had intimated that the ſeveral Gifts, in ſo great Requeſt among the *Corinthians*, ſhould fail; *whether there be Prophecies*, ſays he, *they ſhall fail; whether there be Tongues, they ſhall ceaſe; whether there be Knowledge, it ſhall vaniſh*

niſh away. In the Text it is probable he refers to what he had there aſſerted, but now abideth Faith, Hope and Charity, *&c.* q. d. thoſe Gifts are but temporary expiring Things; all thoſe extraordinary Attainments, Propheſy, Tongues, *&c.* were ſoon to come to a Period; they were intended only for a Time, for the better introducing and eſtabliſhing the Chriſtian Religion in the World: And accordingly it is many Ages ſince they ceaſed. But though theſe Gifts ceaſe in the Church, there are other Graces that remain; as he ſuggeſts in this laſt Verſe; where we have to conſider (1.) The Graces that are ſaid to *abide*, i. e. continue in the Chriſtian Church, and with all the Members of it as long as they are in this World, *viz. Faith, Hope, Charity.* (2.) The Preference of Charity to all the reſt; *but the greateſt of theſe is Charity.*

In diſcourſing further upon theſe words, I ſhall

I. Give a ſhort Account of the ſeveral Graces here mentioned.

II. Inquire why they are ſaid now to abide. And

III. Shew how it muſt be underſtood, and on what Account it is, that Charity is ſaid to be the greateſt of them.

I. I ſhall give a ſhort Account of the ſeveral Graces here mentioned, Faith, Hope, Charity: And ſhall begin with the firſt of them.

1. Now abideth Faith. This is one of thoſe Graces of a Chriſtian that abide with him thro' his whole Life and Pilgrimage. I muſt not pretend to explain it at large; but ſhall only offer two or three Remarks concerning its Nature and Properties. As

1. That

1. That it ſtrictly ſignifies the Belief of a Teſtimony; an Aſſent to this or that Propoſition upon the Teſtimony of another. Human Faith is the Belief of a Thing upon human Teſtimony: Divine Faith, (which is what we have to conſider at preſent) is the Belief of this or that Propoſition upon the divine Teſtimony, *i. e.* as revealed and made known by God. So that the Object of Faith in this Senſe, is as large as the divine Revelation: It reſpects the whole Syſtem of Truths contained in the Bible, and that God has revealed. Particularly, to give you a more diſtinct View of this Grace,

It reſpects the Doctrines, Precepts, Laws, Promiſes, and Threatenings that God has revealed. Whatever of this kind he has made known to his Church, Faith embraces as coming from him; and receives it with the like Reverence and Subjection as if it was declared from Heaven with an audible Voice, and introduced with that ſolemn Preface not uncommon in the Scripture, *thus ſaith the Lord*. Every one that has this divine Faith aſſents to all God has revealed implicitly and explicitly (as the Diſtinction is) to all the neceſſary and fundamental Doctrines of Religion. There are many Things that are contained in the Bible, that a Multitude of Chriſtians are ignorant of; and conſequently, they cannot be ſaid to believe them with an explicit direct Faith: But then it muſt be allowed they have a general Faith in all that God reveals; reſting in his Veracity and Truth, and being aſſured that what he ſays is true, that he will not, cannot deceive them. They aſſent to every Doctrine in general, and particularly to all the great eſſential Doctrines of Religion. Theſe they believe diſtinctly; have ſome Knowledge and Underſtanding of them,

them, and aſſent to them upon the Credit of the Revealer.

They believe the Scripture Revelation concerning God; his Nature, Attributes, *&c.* For tho' theſe are the proper Objects of our Knowledge, and capable of rational Demonſtration; and ſo may be ſuppoſed as known without Scripture Revelation: Yet as this Revelation aſſiſts our Knowledge in this Reſpect, I do not ſee but they may be conſidered as Objects of our Faith. Thus we believe that there is a God, and but one God; that he is all-ſufficient, can do every Thing, is from everlaſting to everlaſting, that is, the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God; of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all Things, *&c.*

We believe God's Teſtimony in his Word concerning his Son; his Perſon, Nature, Offices, and all the Rules and Laws he delivered to the World, concerning the Holy Spirit, concerning Pardon of Sin, Faith, eternal Life, and the way thereto; concerning the Neceſſity, and ſeveral Branches of Holineſs; our Duty to God, our Neighbour and ourſelves. Faith views all theſe as ſo many divine Oracles; aſſents to them; ſetting its Seal and Amen thereto in the Words of the Angel in the *Revelations*, Chap. xix. 9. *Theſe are the true Sayings of God.*

And then Faith reſpects the Hiſtory of Scripture. *By Faith*, ſays the Apoſtle, *we believe the Worlds were made by the Word of God*, Heb. xi. 3. The Philoſophers diſpute whether the World was made or not, when and how it was made? with a great many Queſtions of that kind: But all this the Chriſtian knows by the Teſtimony of him that made it. By Faith we not only know that the World was made, but that it was de-

ſtroyed

ſtroyed by a Flood. We know that *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were overthrown by an amazing Shower of Fire and Brimſtone from above. We know by the ſame Means the reſt of the great Events recorded both in the Old Teſtament and the New: We know that the Son of God came down from Heaven; that the Word was made Fleſh, that he lived and converſed among Men; taught ſuch Doctrines, and wrought the Miracles we have an Account of in Scripture; that he was crucified, died, and was buried, roſe again from the dead, and aſcended up into Heaven, where he ſits at the Right-hand of God. Now theſe and all the reſt of the ſacred Hiſtories Faith aſſents to; and which is proper to its Nature, it doth, as it were preſentiate Things; though its Object be at a Diſtance it brings it into View and ſets it before the Eyes of the Mind. Thus for Inſtance the Creation and Deluge are paſt Things, done many thouſand Years ago; and yet Faith realizes them, repreſents the Scenes to the Mind as if they were preſent.

Once more. Faith reſpects future Things, aſſents to all the Diſcoveries God has been pleaſed to make of them, and gives them a ſort of Being and Exiſtence; thus the Apoſtle deſcribes it to be *the Subſtance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not ſeen*, Heb. xi. 1. The Subſtance or Subſiſtence, ὑπόςασις; it gives them, as I ſaid, a ſort of a preſent Being, is the Evidence and Demonſtration of them. In ſhort, it looks back to Things paſt, and forward to Things to come; ſo far as either are revealed; repreſenting them as real, and, as it were, now exiſting. As by Faith we know the Worlds were made by the Word of God, ſo by Faith we know they ſhall be diſſolved: that *the Heavens ſhall paſs away with a great Noiſe, the Elements melt with fervent Heat, the Earth alſo, and the Works*

Works that are therein be burnt up. What *John* ſaith with Relation to his prophetic Viſion, *Rev.* xx. 12. the Believer may repeat with Reference to a great many important Articles; he ſees the Dead riſing out of their Graves, the Son of Man coming in the Clouds, and all the Proceſs of the laſt Judgment. This is the Office of that Faith I am deſcribing, its Property and Nature. It extends as far as the divine Revelation, and gives an Aſſent to every divine Teſtimony.

Only let me ſuggeſt that it is not any kind of Aſſent that may be called Faith, that Faith which is divine and ſaving; for it muſt have ſuch Properties as theſe in it.

It muſt be grounded upon Evidence. *The ſimple believeth every Word,* ſaith *Solomon,* Prov. xiv. 15. Moſt Mens Faith is no better than Credulity; they take Things for granted without inquiring into the Evidence and Reaſons of them. And 'tis from this Eaſineſs of Belief that People generally go along with the Religion and Profeſſion of their Country. Thus one Man is a Chriſtian, another a Mahometan or a Pagan; one a Papiſt, another a Proteſtant; and that upon no other Reaſon, or Conviction, but becauſe theſe Profeſſions obtain where they live. But true Faith is better grounded; it embraces divine Truths upon proper Evidence; not that every Chriſtian is acquainted with all the Evidences of Chriſtianity, or with the beſt Evidence; even good Men are too careleſs in their Enquiries into theſe Things: However, ſome Evidence they have; they do not take up a Religion and profeſs it they know not why; and I reckon the greater Light and Clearneſs they have as to the Grounds of their Faith, the ſtronger and more divine their Faith: They not only believe that whatever God has ſaid is true;

but they have ſome Proof that God has ſaid ſuch and ſuch Things as are the great Objects of their Faith. The Evangeliſt wrote his Goſpel that *Theophilus* might *know the Certainty of thoſe Things* wherein he had been inſtructed, *Luke* i. 4. We ſhould endeavour to know the Certainty of the Truths we believe, and ſomething of this every true Chriſtian one way or other muſt be ſuppoſed to know. Divine Faith is not Credulity or Conjecture, but has a divine Foundation, the Word of God, and that appearing in its proper Light and Evidence.

Again, this Aſſent of Faith to a divine Revelation carries in it a ſuitable Reſignation and Subjection of Mind to the Authority of God therein. The Chriſtian doth not ſtick at Difficulties, nor cavil againſt this or that revealed Truth. If God has ſaid it, that it is, or that it ſhall be, 'tis enough with him; he reſts therein, *i. e.* in the divine Authority, Wiſdom, Power; without asking, in a way of Diffidence, how can theſe Things be. Thus 'tis ſaid of *Abraham*, that he *believed in Hope againſt Hope*; and he reſigns to his Word, acquieſces therein notwithſtanding all Diſcouragements. *He conſidered not his own Body now dead, being* about an hundred Years old; *neither the Deadneſs of* Sarah's *Womb: He ſtaggered not at the Promiſe of God through Unbelief; but was ſtrong in Faith, giving Glory to God*, Rom. iv. 18, 19, 20. And the ſame Faith we find triumphing afterwards when he received a Command to ſacrifice his Son: All the Families of the Earth were to be bleſſed in him: He was to have a numerous Iſſue by him: and yet now he muſt die, immediately die, and that by his Father's Hand. What then would become of the Promiſe? No doubt here was a Difficulty he could not ſurmount by his own Reaſon. And

yet

yet he could truſt God, and leave him to accompliſh his Word; being aſſured he was faithful that had promiſed. Hence, ſaith the Apoſtle, *by Faith* Abraham, *when he was tried, offered up* Iſaac; *accounting that God was able to raiſe him up even from the Dead, from whence alſo he received him in a Figure*, Heb. xi. 17, 19. He received him at firſt from the Dead, as it were, *i. e.* from his own and *Sarah*'s dead Bodies, which, it may be, is the Figure the Apoſtle here mentions. And, no queſtion, this Inſtance of the divine Power with Reference to the Birth of his Son, aſſiſted his Faith in the preſent Exerciſe of it: However, he did not object, but reſign; firmly believing the Word of God, and the Promiſe of God, againſt all Difficulties. And this there muſt be in our Faith, and this there is in divine Faith. Whatever God has revealed concerning himſelf, concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, the Myſtery of the Trinity or Incarnation, the Reſurrection of the Body, or any other Doctrines of our Religion, we are not to cavil againſt theſe Things, becauſe we do not underſtand how they are, or how they can be. We muſt not indeed pretend to underſtand more than God has revealed, but what he has revealed is to be embraced without objecting. This Submiſſion we owe to the Wiſdom and Authority of God. We are to examine whether this or that Propoſition be revealed; and when we find it revealed, 'tis the Buſineſs of divine Faith to receive it without any cavilling on the Account of Difficulties.

Further the Aſſent of divine Faith is cordial and hearty. Thus the Apoſtle repreſents it to be, Rom. x. 9. *If thou ſhalt confeſs with thy Mouth the Lord Jeſus, and believe in thy Heart that the Lord raiſed him from the Dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved.* It follows

follows Verſe 10. *For with the Heart Man believeth unto Righteouſneſs, and with the Mouth Confeſſion is made unto Salvation.* And ſaith *Philip* to the Eunuch, *If thou believeſt with all thy Heart thou mayſt* be baptiſed, *Acts* viii. 37. Faith conſiders divine Things not only as true, but as great and important, and accordingly embraces them heartily and affectionately, the Soul coming under the Power and Influence of them.

Hereupon I may add, That divine Faith is owing to a divine Hand. 'Tis of the Operation of God (as the Expreſſion is,) *Coloſ.* ii. 12. God reveals the Object, and opens the Mind to receive and entertain it, according to the Deſign and Purport of it.

So that, in a Word, the Aſſent of a Chriſtian not only reaches to all divine Things which God hath made known, not only conſiders them in their Certainty and Evidence, but in their Tendency and Importance. The Heart goes along with divine Faith; the Will cloſes with the Objects the Underſtanding preſents. Thus 'tis ſaid of the primitive Believers, *Heb.* xi. 13. That *being perſuaded of the Promiſes they embraced them*; they expected the promiſed Good, and purſued the Enjoyment with Zeal and Affection. Thus do ſuch as believe to purpoſe and to the ſaving of the Soul. And hereby their Faith is diſtinguiſhed from Opinion, Speculation, and bare Aſſent; this the Devils we are told have, they believe and tremble, *Jam.* ii. 19. And this many Hypocrites and wicked Men have; they own the Bible, and may with ſome Strength of Argument defend the Scripture Revelation; and I queſtion not, write Comments upon it, and learnedly explain it, and yet be Strangers to divine Faith; they do not believe with the Heart, with all the Heart; do not diſcern the Excellency,

cellency, Neceſſity and Importance of Religion; do not ſee the Pearl of great Price offered them in the Promiſes of the Goſpel, ſo as to ſell all and buy it; do not believe its Threatnings, ſo as to avoid the Danger of a ſinful Courſe; do not believe the Commands of God, ſo as to make it their Buſineſs to comply therewith, and conform Heart and Life thereto; nor what's ſaid of the Glories of another World, ſo as to ſeek it with a conſtant Preference to all the little Intereſts and Advantages of this. But that Faith which is of God's Operation, has this Power and Influence in it; God reveals his Truth, and then with his own Hand impreſſes it upon the Mind. And thus I have conſidered the firſt Act of it, as it is an Aſſent to a Teſtimony.

2. Beſides Aſſent there is Conſent in divine Faith. And this Act of it principally reſpects the Chriſtian Covenant, and more particularly the Lord Jeſus, the Scheme and Method of Salvation by him; this is frequently ſpoken of in the New Teſtament under the Notion of believing in Chriſt, believing in his Name, and the like.

I am not here to explain this at large; that would detain me too long on a Subject that I only propoſe to touch by the by. I ſhall therefore juſt hint that it ſuppoſes and includes ſuch Things as theſe.

An Aſſent to, or Belief of all that God has revealed concerning his Son the Lord Jeſus and Salvation by him; as that he is the promiſed Meſſiah; that he came into the World, was made Fleſh, died for our Sins, and roſe again for our Juſtification; that eternal Life is in him; that in him we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveneſs of Sins according to the Riches of his Grace.

And further it implies that we accept of him as our Lord and Saviour; which is our covenanting Act. The Scripture represents him not only as the King, Lord and Head of the Church, but often as the Bridegroom of it; as Matth. xxv. 10. *While they went to buy, the Bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the Marriage, and the Door was shut.* And *Rev.* xix. 9. you read of the Marriage of the Lamb, and of the Lamb's Wife. Now Faith is as it were the Marriage Contract, a signing Articles between Christ and the Believer; 'tis the Soul's accepting the Lord Jesus and Resignation to him; thus it is described, John i. 12. *To as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.*

Once more, it implies a humble Dependance upon him, and an intrusting our selves in his Hand; as in that of the Apostle, 2 Tim. i. 12. *I know whom I have believed, and am perswaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that Day.* Assent to a Truth upon Testimony is the Foundation of all Faith, and the more proper Notion of it, but it is not the whole that is meant by it in the Gospel; it signifies also to trust a Person; and in short, divine Faith brings the Soul under the Government of the Lord Jesus. 'Tis the Christian's Subjection to Christ, or to God in and through Christ; 'tis our Espousal to him, our covenanting Act, and according to our Sincerity herein proved, in a Course of Loyalty and Faithfulness, is our Christianity.

And thus much for the first of these three Graces that we find here distinguished. Now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity; Faith abideth, and you see what that Faith is that abideth.

2. As

2. As Faith, ſo *Hope abideth* alſo. This is another of theſe Graces that accompanies a Chriſtian through this preſent State, and without which he would ſoon forſake his Religion, or at leaſt miſcarry in it, for want of ſomething to animate and encourage him. Now concerning this Grace let me remark a few Particulars. As

That it reſpects Things future or to come. *We are ſaved by Hope;* ſays the Apoſtle, *but hope that is ſeen is not Hope; for what a Man ſeeth, why doth he yet hope for?* Rom. viii. 24. No Man hopes for what he is in Poſſeſſion of, and herein it differs from Faith, which hath for its Object Things paſt as well as Things to come; but Hope is wholly confin'd to what is future. Again.

The Object of Hope is not only future, but ſomething deſirable and good. A Perſon may expect future evil Things, and fear them, but cannot hope for them. Hope always views its Object as amiable, and accordingly tends towards it with Pleaſure, as being ſomething the Enjoyment of which will one way or other better our State, and contribute to our Happineſs.

Further. Hope like Faith is grounded upon divine Revelation; upon the Word and Promiſes of God, and ſo has a divine Warrant. Indeed a Man may have a probable Hope in many Inſtances from the Nature and Attributes of God, his Mercy, Goodneſs, and the like. But a clear firm Hope muſt have a clear Promiſe for its Foundation. And let me ſubjoin under this Head that it extends to all God has promiſed, both with Reſpect to the *preſent* and *future* Life.

With Reſpect to the preſent Life, as that *God will not ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will with the Temptation make a Way to eſcape, that we may be able to bear it,* 1 Cor. x. 13. That

he will give his holy Spirit to them that ask him. That he will never leave us nor forſake us. Theſe general Promiſes, with a Multitude more particular ones adapted to the ſeveral Caſes of Chriſtians Hope fixes upon, and lives upon.

And then it has for its Entertainment all the promiſed Glories of another World. 'Tis an Anchor to the Soul, ſure and ſtedfaſt, which entereth into that within the Vale, *Heb.* vi. 19. Hope can enter Heaven, and anticipate the Joys of it; and having Faith for its Perſpective now begins its Triumph. Hence that of the Apoſtle, Rom. v. 2. *We rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God.* I do not queſtion many of you underſtand this, and are often refreſhing your ſelves with the Contemplation of the ſeparate State, and eſpecially of the Triumphs of the Reſurrection.

I add, divine Hope has ſeveral diſtinguiſhing Characters which may be conſidered as the Properties of it. For Inſtance, 'tis of God. He is the Author of it; he begets us again to a lively Hope, 1 *Pet.* i. 3. This, as every other Grace, is from his Spirit. He lays the Foundation of it in the Scripture, and works the Principles of it in the Heart.

Further. It is of an active Nature, excites the Soul to warm and vigorous Endeavours in purſuit of its Object. *He that hath this Hope,* ſaith the Apoſtle, *purifieth himſelf as he is pure,* 1 John iii. 3. Faith ſhews the Object as deſirable, and accordingly deſire and hope, which are as the Wing of the Soul, preſs towards it with a Reſolution that bears down all Oppoſition. When the Apoſtle had ſpoke of having Hope towards God, *Acts* xxiv. 15. He adds, *and herein,* or, as it may be rendered, hereupon, *do I exerciſe my ſelf to have always a Conſcience void of Offence toward God, and toward*

ward Men, Verſe 16. True Faith will excite Hope, and both together will inſpire the Soul with Reſolution, that no Man ſhall take the Crown; they will overcome the World, the Fleſh, the Devil, and be an abiding Principle of all Holineſs, Obedience and Diligence in Religion. In the next Place,

3. The other Grace I ſhould have mentioned and given ſome Account of is Charity. Now *abideth Faith, Hope, Charity.* But as I have already had Occaſion, when I enter'd upon this Subject, to explain that Grace, I ſhall here paſs it over, and refer you to the Place where I have conſidered it. And now I proceed

II. To enquire why theſe three Graces particularly are ſaid to abide. Now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, theſe three. Why theſe three? I anſwer: It muſt not be underſtood as if theſe Graces, excluſive of others, remained with us in this World, as if they were the only Graces of Chriſtians; not only Faith, Hope, Love, but Humility, Meekneſs, Patience, Temperance, and many other Graces abide with the Chriſtian, are his Care, Study, and conſtant Exerciſe in the preſent State. But theſe are ſingled out, and, by way of Eminency and Diſtinction, are ſaid to abide: Now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, theſe three; that is theſe eſpecially. There muſt, no doubt, be ſome Reaſon why the Apoſtle ſets a Mark upon theſe Graces as what abideth now with us; now that is whilſt here below.

And it may be they are ſaid to abide to hint to the *Corinthians* their great Value above thoſe Gifts that are the Subject of the foregoing and following Chapters; theſe he had told them, and proved it, ſhould ceaſe even in this World; Prophecy, Tongues, and inſpired Knowledge have accord-

ingly long ſince ceaſed; but, ſays he, Faith, Hope and Charity abide, thereby giving them the Preference to all ſuch Attainments. He ſignifies to them of how much more Importance theſe Graces were than thoſe Gifts; Men may be Chriſtians, and get to Heaven without thoſe extraordinary Gifts they were ſo proud of; the greateſt Part of the Church is ſaved without them. But Faith, Hope, Charity, are of an higher Nature, more eſſential and neceſſary, and therefore ſhould be more eſteemed by them. Again.

Theſe three may be ſaid to abide, and are ſingled out from all other Graces, as what do ſo the better to illuſtrate and prove the Excellency of Charity. And accordingly having diſtinguiſhed them as he does, he gives it the Preference to them all; theſe three abide, but the greateſt of theſe is Charity, *q. d.* tho' theſe are the more excellent Graces, far more excellent than any inſpired extraordinary Gifts, and all of them have an Excellency in them, yet Charity exceeds the reſt. So that in the Concluſion of his Diſcourſe he keeps his general Deſign in View, which was to recommend Charity, and therefore compares it with ſome of the moſt eminent Graces, and raiſes it above them.

Or, theſe three are ſaid to abide becauſe of their Neceſſity, high Importance, and Uſefulneſs in the Chriſtian Life, which indeed is imply'd in both the former Particulars. The Chriſtian cannot want any Grace without Loſs and Diſadvantage; but theſe are cardinal, chief, and moſt eminent Graces, eſſentially neceſſary, and therefore I ſuppoſe have this Mark of Diſtinction put upon them. I might ſhew this at large, juſt to glance at a few Things.

1. They are neceſſary to the very Being of a Chriſtian. Other Graces are in their Place very uſeful;

uſeful; they are neceſſary to the Ornament and well Being of Religion, as Meekneſs, Patience, Humility, Courteſy, and the like; but theſe are Graces of a ſtricter Neceſſity and Concern, the very Vitals of Religion. A Man may want ſome of his Members, as a Finger or a Hand, and yet be a Man, tho' maimed and imperfect; but if he wants the Head or Heart, or any of the more eſſential Members, he is deſtroyed and periſhes. The new Man ſeems to have ſome Members more eſſential and neceſſary than others; and of this ſort I account the Graces in the Text are, Faith, Hope, and Charity. A Chriſtian ſuffers by the Declenſion or Suſpenſion of any Grace; but if you deſtroy his Faith, Hope, or Charity, you ruin him at once. This is like wounding and deſtroying a vital Part. I might ſhew the abſolute Neceſſity of all theſe Graces, and of each particularly.

To begin with Faith; 'tis certain this is neceſſary, as it is the Foundation of all Religion, and the Spring of all our Motions in the divine Life. This is evident from the eleventh Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, where you have an Hiſtory of the many glorious Exploits of Faith. All the great Things thoſe Worthies did were done by Faith, as you are there told; *by Faith* Abel *offered a more excellent Sacrifice than* Cain, *by which he obtained Witneſs that he was righteous. By Faith* Enoch *was tranſlated that he ſhould not ſee Death, and was not found, becauſe God had tranſlated him.* And as the Apoſtle runs through a great Number of Inſtances, which may be conſidered as a Cloud of Witneſſes to the Excellency of Faith, in the ſixth Verſe he lays down a general Concluſion with Reference thereto, *viz.* that *without Faith 'tis impoſſible to pleaſe God; for he that cometh to God muſt believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.*

In ſhort, conſider Faith, as it gives Aſſent to divine Revelation, and it furniſhes you with all the Materials and Motives of Religion. If a Man does not believe his Bible all Religion is laid aſide at once; ſtop that Spring and all the Streams of Chriſtian Religion are of Courſe cut off. Conſider it according to the Apoſtle's Definition, as *the Subſtance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not ſeen*; as it realizes another World, and every one may diſcern the Neceſſity of it; deprive Religion of the Auxiliaries, and Helps it receives from a future State (the Belief and Proſpect thereof) and it immediately languiſhes and dies away; every Temptation taken from preſent Intereſt, either Profit or Pleaſure, will baffle and triumph over it; for what Argument can a Man have to reject the Baits that are laid before him from this World that doth not in earneſt believe another? *This is the Victory*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that overcometh the World, even our Faith*, 1 John v. 4. *Moſes* endured, as ſeeing him who is inviſible; he refuſed to be called *the Son of* Pharaoh's *Daughter, eſteeming the Reproach of Chriſt greater Riches than the Treaſures of* Egypt; *for he had Reſpect unto the Recompence of Reward*, Heb. xi. 24, 26, 27. His Faith enabled him to look beyond theſe Things to the Glories of a future World, and bravely to deſpiſe them, and trample them under Foot, as they ſtood in Competition with greater and infinitely better Things, the eternal Recompence of Reward. So it is ſaid of thoſe other Champions in the following Part of the Chapter, that went through ſuch Hazards and Death, that they would not *accept Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Reſurrection*, Ver. 35. It was their Faith that ſpirited them for ſuch mighty Atchievements, which had they been deſtitute of they had fainted in the Day of Trial,

and

and given up all the great Points of their Religion. Again. Conſider Faith, as it reſpects the Chriſtian Covenant, and Chriſt the Head of the Chriſtian Church, 'tis of like Neceſſity: Hereby a Chriſtian is united to the Lord Jeſus, and thro' the Spirit derives conſtant Communication and Supplies from him; without which he would be as a Branch cut off from the Vine that preſently decays and periſheth. *Abide in me*, ſays Chriſt, *and I in you; for as the Branch cannot bear Fruit of itſelf, except it abide in the Vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me; for without me ye can do nothing*, John xv. 4, 5. So that it is evident that Faith is a moſt neceſſary Grace; neceſſary to the very Being of a Chriſtian.

And the ſame might be ſhewn of Hope. This is the great Spring of Action, both in the human and in the divine Life. The Husbandman plows in Hope, and ſows in Hope; the Merchant trades in Hope; nor would any undergo Fatigue and Danger, but upon the Proſpect of Advantage. 'Tis thus with Chriſtians; remove Hope out of their Religion, and you immediately ſtrike it dead. The Apoſtle's Expreſſion is full and general, Rom. viii. 24. *We are ſaved by Hope*; 'tis the great Inſtrument of Religion, and ſuggeſts all the ſtrong and powerful Motives to it. Why doth the Chriſtian deny himſelf? crucify the Fleſh? watch unto Prayer? but that he hopes for Acceptance with God, and a Bleſſing this way. Faith repreſents the Promiſe, and Hope takes hold on the promiſed Good, and ſo leads him on in his Duty, makes him *ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, knowing* that his *Labour will not be in vain in the Lord.*

Nor will the like Obſervation be unjuſt, with Reference to the third Grace, namely, Charity.

This

This is of the greateſt Uſe in the Chriſtian Life, and abſolutely neceſſary to the Being of a Chriſtian; as appears from this ſingle Argument (to omit others) that it is the Spring of all the Duty we owe to our Neighbour, and a ſort of a Security for the Performance thereof; hence that of the Apoſtle, Rom. xiii. 8. *He that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law.* He adds by way of Comment in the following Verſe, *For this, thou ſhalt not commit Adultery; thou ſhalt not kill; thou ſhalt not ſteal; thou ſhalt not bear falſe Witneſs; thou ſhalt not covet; and if there be any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this Saying, namely, Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.* And he goes on Ver. 10. *Love worketh no ill to his Neighbour, therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* He means that Part of the Law which reſpects our Neighbour, our Intercourſe and Correſpondence with him; and 'tis eaſy to diſcern that where there is Love, there will be a ſuitable Conſideration of him, and an Attendance to all thoſe Offices we owe him: If we love him, eſpecially according to the Rule, *as our ſelves*, we ſhall not detract from him, defraud or injure him; if we love him we ſhall not reproach him, much leſs cheat and oppreſs him: Benevolence is eſſential to Love, and where that is real it will reſtrain from every thing that's hurtful, and iſſue forth in all kind and good Services. On the other Hand, if Love be wanting, the Fountain and Spring of all theſe Duties is dried up; and that Enmity that is in the Heart, which ſupplants the divine Grace we are ſpeaking of, will be a conſtant Principle of Miſchief and Evil.

So that I may conclude, theſe Graces are of chief Moment to the Chriſtian, and of the higheſt Neceſſity in Religion: If theſe fail all fails; our Motion is ſtopt; we have neither Principles

ciples for ſpiritual Action, nor ſufficient Motives to it.

2. As they are neceſſary to the Being of a Chriſtian, ſo to his Defenſe and Safety. This might be evidenced with Reſpect to all of them; but I muſt not ſtand upon Particulars; you may obſerve when the Apoſtle had repreſented the Uſefulneſs of ſeveral Graces under the Metaphor of ſo many Pieces of Armour offenſive and defenſive, (Eph. vi.) He adds, (ver. 16.) *Above all taking the Shield of Faith wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked*; intimating the eminent Service and Uſefulneſs of Faith in the Chriſtian Warfare; 'tis a Shield to the Chriſtian, without which he is perpetually expoſed to the Aſſaults of his Enemies. And elſewhere you find all the three mentioned as ſo many Weapons of Defence, as 1 *Theſſ.* v. 8. But let us who are of the Day be ſober, putting on the Breaſt-plate of Faith and Love, and for an Helmet the Hope of Salvation. Faith, Hope, and Love are a Chriſtian's Breaſt-Plate and Shield, and as ſuch the great Means of his Safety in the Midſt of the Dangers he is converſant with in the preſent State. Faith repreſents his Enemies, ſhews him the glorious Iſſue of his Combat, derives Arguments from thence, help from the Promiſes, all which Hope confirms; ſo that theſe Graces are to a Chriſtian like the ſeveral Pieces of Armour to a Soldier with which they are compared. I might add,

3. Theſe Graces are neceſſary to the Succeſs, Comfort, final Victory and Triumph of the Chriſtian. *This is the Victory*, ſays the Apoſtle, *that overcometh the World, even our Faith.* And then for Comfort that Text is moſt expreſs, 1 Pet. i. 8. *Whom having not ſeen, ye love, in whom, though you ſee him not, yet believing ye rejoice with Joy unſpeak-*

able

able and full of Glory. Hope and Love have the like Influence; they are active Graces and Springs of Comfort, and the more they abound the more Zeal and Diligence there will be in Religion, and the more inward Peace and Conſolation. But I ſhall not draw out my Diſcourſe further on this Head.

I have given you ſome Account of theſe Graces, and ſhewn you why they are ſaid to abide, why theſe are ſingled out from among the reſt of the Graces, as what abide with us in this World. And now

III. I am to enquire on what Account Charity has the Preference to the other two. *Now abideth Faith, Hope and Charity, and the greateſt of theſe is Charity.* Why is Charity repreſented as the greateſt? I anſwer, not with Reſpect to its Office in this Life; if we make a Compariſon here, I know not but Faith may have the Preference; hence we are ſaid not only to be juſtified by Faith, to walk by Faith, but frequently *to live by Faith.* But when it is ſaid the greateſt of theſe is Charity, I reckon the Apoſtle means chiefly with reſpect to its Duration; it is an everlaſting Grace. Now though Faith and Hope are moſt excellent Graces, yet they are but preparatory Graces; they are only uſeful in this World, but ſhall ceaſe in the other. Faith ſhall be ſwallowed up in Viſion and Hope in Fruition; *for what a Man ſeeth,* ſays the Apoſtle, *why doth he yet hope for.* Faith is as the Glaſs by which we now ſee darkly, but when we come to ſee Face to Face, we ſhall lay aſide the Glaſs, and need it no more. Hope is no more than a pleaſing Expectation grounded upon the Report Faith makes; at beſt but a Foretaſt; but when we arrive in the World of full Light and full Poſſeſſion, theſe

Graces

Graces will be at an end, as being no longer uſeful. But Charity runs into the other World, and will laſt through the Ages of Eternity. The Knowledge and Enjoyments of the Bleſſed will be ſo far from diminiſhing their Love, that they will ſupply it with freſh Matter and Motives, and miniſter to its everlaſting Exerciſe. How Charity will be employed in Heaven, I have before ſhewed, I mean I have given you my Conjectures, and I ſhall not here repeat or add to what I have ſaid on that Head. It is ſufficient that every one may eaſily ſee how juſtly the Apoſtle gives it the Preference here, and determines that *the greateſt of theſe is Charity*. Shortly, Faith and Hope will expire and Charity only abide, it is one of the Graces of Heaven, and being eternal, muſt be greater than ſuch Graces as are only temporary in their Exerciſe. If any ſhould ask, will there be no Faith and Hope in Heaven? I anſwer, in a leſs proper Senſe there may; as Saints will believe Things paſt, believe and hope for the Continuance of their Happineſs. But in a ſtrict and proper Senſe theſe Graces are only for *Viators*, belong to us in this State of Preparation and Tryal; are like Scaffolds to a Building, which you know are taken down when the Structure is finiſhed; whereas Love is a final Grace, part of the Building itſelf, will be one Ingredient in Heaven, and continue for ever in it.

And now let me take occaſion from what has been ſaid, to recommend theſe particular Graces to your Regard and Eſteem. *Now abideth Faith, Hope and Charity, theſe three*; they have an Aſteriſm, as I may ſay, a Note of Diſtinction ſet upon them, that we may attend to them as Things of great Concernment to us. Therefore

1. Be

1. Be exhorted to endeavour after theſe divine Graces. After every one and all of them, ſee that you have them and live in the Exerciſe of them.

Particularly ſee that you have Faith, that firſt and fundamental Grace, without which you can neither be Chriſtians, nor perform any thing to purpoſe in the Chriſtian Profeſſion. Endeavour for it as it is an Aſſent to a divine Teſtimony; believe what God has ſpoken, all he has ſpoken, and not only receive the ſeveral Propoſitions of divine Revelation, as true, but attend to the Importance of them. Endeavour for Faith, as it is an Act of the Heart and Will, a covenanting Act. *I have eſpouſed you*, ſays the Apoſtle, *to one Huſband, that I may preſent you as a chaſte Virgin to Chriſt*, 2 Cor. xi. 2. All Chriſtians, that are baptized and have taken upon them the Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion, are thus outwardly eſpouſed to the Lord Jeſus; and real Chriſtians are inwardly and by a full Conſent of Mind eſpouſed to him. Take Care that you have this Faith in both the Acts of it, and ſee that your Faith be of a right Stamp. If you aſk, how ſhall we know whether it be ſo or not? I anſwer, chiefly by the Effects; ſome of which Effects of divine and ſaving Faith I ſhall briefly mention, though it may ſeem a Digreſſion.

And no queſtion this may be reckoned not the leaſt conſiderable among them, that it leſſens the Price and Value of ſenſible and preſent Things, and raiſes the Value of ſpiritual and eternal Things. Indeed Faith and Senſe are the Principles of two different Kinds of Life, and according to the Prevalency of theſe Mankind are divided and may be denominated. Some are wholly under the Power of Senſe and live by Senſe only, and accordingly

value

value nothing but the Objects of Senſe; ſuch Things as are ſuitable to gratify their Appetites and Senſes. The Apoſtle gives you the Sum of their Enjoyments, 1 *John* ii. 16. *All that is in the World is the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eye, and the Pride of Life*; theſe are the World, all the World to carnal Men. Senſe is the Principle they judge by, the Faculty by which they ſee, and what doth not recommend itſelf to their Senſes is nothing with them. Others act from an higher Principle, *viz.* that of Faith, and accordingly theſe have another World of Things (as I may expreſs it) with which they converſe, and which are the Objects of their Happineſs. Whilſt they are in the World they are buſy about Things that are not of the World, ſpiritual Services, ſpiritual Privileges and Bleſſings; for as *they that are after the Fleſh do mind the Things of the Fleſh*, ſo *they that are after the Spirit, the Things of the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 5. And then as to their main Reference and End, their Eye is carried quite beyond this World and above it; *We look not*, ſays the Apoſtle, *at Things which are ſeen, but at Things which are not ſeen; for the Things which are ſeen, are temporal, but the Things which are not ſeen, are eternal*, 2 Cor. iv. 18. And this is one chief Property of true Faith; it is a Principle of ſpiritual and divine Life, it opens the Eyes of the Mind, it introduces a new Scene of Things, and ſhews them in their Importance and Value, and engages the Soul in the Purſuit of them. Where Senſe prevails, the Objects of Senſe are the great Things, the only Things of Influence; on the other Hand, where Faith prevails, ſpiritual Objects are ſo.

And then divine Faith endears the Lord Jeſus. I before obſerved that it reſpects Chriſt in one

of its eminent Acts, being the Soul's Eſpouſal to him; and when this is brought about, the true Believer finds a great deal of Pleaſure in the Relation, and much Entertainment in his Commerce with the heavenly Bridegroom. *To* them that *believe he is precious*, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Chriſt and the ſeveral Duties and Services of the Chriſtian Religion have an Excellency in them to Believers; as they have committed their Souls to Chriſt they find reſt for their Souls in him. They own his Authority, rejoyce in his Headſhip, Protection and Influence, are pleaſed in his Work, and think themſelves happy under the Conduct of his Spirit and Grace.

Once more (not to multiply Particulars) divine Faith is a Principle of univerſal Obedience, it conſiders the *Commandment* as *holy, juſt and good*, and endeavours a Conformity thereto. *I eſteem thy Precepts*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *concerning all Things to be right*, Pſal. cxix. 128. Thus doth true Faith, and accordingly cloſes heartily therewith. Again, it conſiders the Connection there is between preſent Duty and future Happineſs, and as it chuſes Heaven for its end, ſo Obedience for the way. And indeed this is the great Teſt of divine Faith, as the Apoſtle intimates, *Jam.* ii. 14. *What doth it profit, my Brethren, that a Man ſaith he hath Faith, and hath not Works? can Faith ſave him?* And again, *ver.* 18. *Shew me thy Faith without thy Works, and I will ſhew thee my Faith by my Works.* And after ſeveral Strokes to the ſame Purpoſe he concludes, *ver.* 26. *As the Body without the Spirit is dead, ſo Faith without Works is dead alſo.* To ſay we believe another World, when we do not ſeek it in the way the Goſpel preſcribes; to ſay we believe in Chriſt, and yet do not ſubject ourſelves to his Authority, is all Deluſion.

Deluſion. In ſuch a Caſe, we only ſay we have Faith, but really have it not; it is a dead ineffectual Opinion we take up with, which is but like a Body without a Spirit, and will profit nothing. Enquire therefore into your Faith, and endeavour it may be of the right ſort.

Again, hope is another Grace we ſhould purſue, it is here joyned with Faith, and indeed is of like Neceſſity as has been already ſuggeſted. Labour for this Grace alſo, and make Proof of it. It may likewiſe be known by its Properties and Effects, which are ſuch as theſe.

It raiſes the Thoughts and Affections to another World, and fixes them on that as its ſure and full Happineſs; hence it is ſaid to enter into that *which is within the Vail*, and for this Reaſon among others, it is that Heaven itſelf is repreſented under the Character and Notion of Hope, *Tit.* ii. 13. *Looking for that bleſſed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* Heaven is the Chriſtian's Hope, called by that Name, as being the great Object of his Hope, the Center of it, and that in which it terminates. There are many good Things a Chriſtian hopes for in this World, as Proviſion, Protection, Supplies both for the Body and Soul, that God will (according to *Agar*'s Prayer) feed him with Food convenient for him, that he will hold up his going in his Statutes, that he will never leave nor forſake him; but the great Thing of all is that at laſt he will be his God and exceeding great Reward; the Anchor of Hope is caſt into Heaven, there it fixes, *looking for the Mercy of the Lord Jeſus unto eternal Life*, Jude ver. 21. Hope is a Grace that ardently aſpires after the heavenly Happineſs; and though ſometimes it is but weak and drooping, is a ſort of a mourning

Hope, and ſhews itſelf only in Deſires, at other Times it gathers more Strength and Courage, appears with a ſort of Triumph, anticipating and ſeizing the Enjoyment before-hand: *We rejoyce*, ſays the Apoſtle, *in hope of the Glory of God*, Rom. v. 2.

Further, as it looks to another World, ſo it ſupports the Soul by its Proſpects under the Troubles and Exerciſes of this World. And on this Account it is called an Anchor, *Heb.* vi. 19. And elſewhere it is called an Helmet, 1 *Theſ.* v. 8. What an Anchor is to the Ship, and an Helmet to the Soldier, that is Hope to the Chriſtian; it holds him ſteady in the Midſt of the Billows of a tempeſtuous World, and defends him againſt the Aſſaults of his Enemies. This it doth partly as it looks to the Promiſes, and thence derives Comfort, and partly as it looks beyond the preſent Scene of Experience and Danger; *theſe light Afflictions*, ſaith Hope, *that are but for a Moment, work* for me *a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*; *Weeping may endure for a Night, but Joy cometh in the Morning*. Chriſtians! is your Hope of this Kind? endeavour that it may be ſo, and it will render you impregnable, no Arrows ſhall pierce you, no Adverſity, no Burthen ſhall be able to ſink you, nor Evil over-power you.

Once more, Chriſtian Hope will animate the Soul, excite to Zeal and Diligence, and quicken to Obedience in all the Inſtances thereof. The Apoſtle deſcribes this Grace, though he doth not expreſly mention it, *Rom.* ii. 7. *To them, who by patient Continuance in well-doing, ſeek for Glory, Honour, and Immortality; eternal Life.* Hope is ſeeking Heaven, and it doth it by a patient Continuance in well-doing. True Hope is a Spring of Life and Motion in Religion, and where this

is

is wanting, it is no more than a Counterfeit; *unto which Promiſe our twelve Tribes conſtantly ſerving God Day and Night, hoped to come*, Acts xxvi. 7. Hope has its conſtant vigorous Efforts, and when it is planted in the Soul will not ſuffer it to ſleep or loiter in Religion.

I might add the ſame Admonition concerning Charity, the other Grace here mentioned; but as the Apoſtle has diſtinguiſhed it, in his Diſcourſe, I ſhall do ſo in mine, and ſpeak to it more at large by itſelf.

2. Endeavour to preſerve theſe Graces in lively Exerciſe, and improve them. You read of the *Theſſalonians* that their Faith grew exceedingly, and the Charity of every one of them towards each other abounded, 2 *Theſ.* i. 3. And the Apoſtle ſpeaks of a *Confidence and rejoycing of Hope*, which he exhorts to hold faſt and firm unto the End, *Heb.* iii. 6. *Now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, theſe three*; they are continuing Graces, and ſhall abide with us as long as we live, and extend through our whole Courſe, we can never want them, and muſt never lay them aſide. Labour to cultivate them more and more; beg that God would encreaſe your Faith, ſhed abroad divine Charity and Love upon your Hearts, and grant you an Hope that's firm, and remains ſo unto the End. No Pleaſure comparable to an Increaſe in theſe Graces, and accordingly we ſhould purſue them with a Solicitude that ſhews we prefer them to all other Things. I add,

3. Do not ſeparate theſe Graces, but exerciſe them in Harmony. *Now abide Faith, Hope, Charity, theſe three*; let them all abide with you, and preſerve the Harmony and Union of them. Let Faith influence and direct your Hope, and both miniſter to your Charity. Hope muſt have Faith

to ſupport and attend it, and go Hand in Hand with it. A great many hope for Things they have no Reaſon to believe ſhall be, which they have no Promiſe for, nor any reaſonable Grounds to expect. Of this Kind is the preſumptuous Hope of wicked Men and Hypocrites; they tell us they hope to be ſaved, and ſuch is their Confidence in that Matter, that they turn their Hopes into a ſort of an Oath, *as I hope to be ſaved*, ſay they, as if their Salvation was a Thing out of Queſtion. And yet there is no Warrant for all this Aſſurance; their Hope is without Faith, as that ſignifies an Aſſent to a divine Teſtimony or believing the Word of God; nay it is againſt the ſtrongeſt Teſtimony and Evidence to the contrary, againſt all Reaſon and Revelation; for if the Scriptures be true, *i. e.* if God be true to his Word, *without Holineſs no Man ſhall ſee the Lord; the Wicked ſhall be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that forget God.* Let us therefore carry Faith along with us in the Exerciſe of our Hope. This the true Chriſtian doth, and therefore his *Hope ſhall not make* him *aſhamed*; he believes the Promiſes of God, and therefore hopes there ſhall be a Performance of all that is ſpoken. In a Word, Faith repreſents the Object as real and certain, and hope lays hold of it as ſuch, nor indeed is our Hope worth any Thing unleſs it hath a ſolid Foundation. I do not mean that we muſt have Aſſurance before we can Hope for any Thing, but we muſt have ſome Reaſon of Hope, and that from the Exerciſe of Faith.

But it may be ſaid that Abraham *againſt Hope, believed in Hope*, Rom. iv. 18. I anſwer, in an ordinary and natural Way he had no Hope, but you muſt conſider he had the Promiſe of God to go upon, and that was Reaſon enough for

Hope,

Hope, notwithſtanding all his Diſcouragements; and therefore *he ſtaggered not at the Promiſe through Unbelief, but being ſtrong in the Faith gave Glory to God*, ver. 20. The Chriſtian may hope for any Thing God has given him Reaſon to expect, any Thing he has revealed, made known, or promiſed ſhall be; thus he hopes for a future State, for a Reſurrection and eternal Life. He has a Divine Faith to ground his Hope upon, as to theſe Points, but to hope for what God has not declared ſhall be, or declared ſhall not be; is the groſſeſt Preſumption. But you will object, it may be, God has not declared that this or that particular Perſon, *Peter* or *John*, ſhall be ſaved, or that you and I ſhall be ſaved, how then can we hope for it? I anſwer, he has declared, he that believes ſhall be ſaved; that the Righteous ſhall go into Life eternal, and conſequently according to our Evidence, that we are ſuch (that we believe and are righteous) we have Warrant for our Hope. Let us therefore take Care that we do not deceive ourſelves by a falſe Hope. *Now abide Faith, Hope, Charity*, if you have no Faith, and no Reaſon of Faith, you can have no good Hope.

And then both theſe ſhould miniſter to our Charity. We ſhould believe what God has ſaid concerning our Neighbour, our Relation and Obligation to him, and concerning all the Duties and Offices we owe him, forbearing him, forgiving him, ſupplying him, and the like; believe the Aſſurance we have of God's accepting and rewarding our Humanity, Tenderneſs and Love to our Brother; hereupon Hope ſhould riſe up and embrace the Promiſe, and from both, Charity, with all its kind and good Offices, ſhould iſſue forth and exert itſelf. And thus it will be in ſome Meaſure, if there be no Defect in theſe

Graces, if none of them be wanting, or very weak. Let us therefore endeavour to cultivate Faith, Hope, Charity, thoſe excellent and admirable Graces, and keep them united, exerciſe them in Harmony; they will cheriſh one another, and mutually ſubſerve one another; the more Faith, the more Hope we ſhall have, and the more of both theſe, the more Charity.

CHAP. VI.

I Have gone through this Chapter in ſeveral Diſcourſes, the Scope of which being to ſet forth the Excellency of Charity, I cannot leave the Subject without ſomewhat more directly recommending that divine and noble Grace to you. And as this is the great Deſign of the whole Chapter, I reckon I may be allowed to take a little further Notice of it. I beg leave therefore in the Cloſe of all, to admoniſh you to endeavour for the excellent Grace of Charity, ſeek it and improve it, and live in the conſtant diligent Exerciſe of it, and in order to your doing ſo, I ſhall here inſiſt on a few Things. (1.) By way of Direction. And (2.) By way of Argument and Motive to this Duty.

I. I ſhall offer ſome Hints for your Direction in this Matter. Follow after Charity, which is greater than all Gifts, and the greateſt of the Graces. And to this Purpoſe

1. Endeavour to underſtand what belongs to this Grace, and purſue and exerciſe it in the full Extent and Latitude thereof. Many are apt to think that nothing is meant by Charity, but giving an Alms to the Poor; whereas that is but one Office of it, and indeed may be ſeparated from true

Charity, as the Apoſtle obſerves in this Chapter, when he ſaith, *though I beſtow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.* But in ſhort, Charity includes Love to Mankind with a Readineſs to treat them well, and perform all good Offices towards them, as Providence adminiſters Occaſion and Opportunity.

More particularly, it includes a due Eſtimation of others: *Solomon* obſerves, *he that deſpiſeth his Neighbour ſinneth*, Prov. xiv. 21. His very Contempt of him is a Sin, and beſides, it is the Occaſion of much Sin, eſpecially it will ſuſpend all the Offices of Charity towards him, for it is not likely we ſhould love or ſerve our Neighbour if we deſpiſe him. Let us therefore conſider what Excellency there is in others, where we ſhall find they are all God's Creatures, rational, immortal, our Brethren in the human Nature, capable of great Things (at leaſt were their Diſtempers healed) and if true Chriſtians, notwithſtanding their Infirmities, they will appear ſtill in higher Ornaments. Now Charity requireth that we attend to ſuch Things, indeed this is the Foundation of it; not that we ſhould think falſly of others, judge them to be what we ſee plainly they are not; but we ſhould think as well of them as we can, and if they want ſome Excellency [the chiefeſt Excellencies] ſhould not overlook ſuch as they have. *Why doſt thou ſet at nought thy Brother?* ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* xiv. 10. A Queſtion we ſhould often put to ourſelves, ſince nothing is a greater Ruin of Charity than an inward Contempt. We ſhould keep our Eyes upon the Excellencies of our Brethren, own theſe, enlarge upon them and caſt a Vail over their Blemiſhes as far as Chriſtian Prudence will allow. This will be a Means of cheriſhing our Love,

and indeed it is one proper Way of exerciſing it.

Again, it includes Benevolence, or an hearty good Will towards our Neighbour, earneſtly deſiring his Proſperity and Welfare in every Inſtance. It was a noble Sally of divine Charity in the Apoſtle towards *Gaius*, 3 John 2. *Beloved, I wiſh above all Things, that thou mayſt proſper and be in Health, even as thy Soul proſpereth.* We ſhould deſire the Good of others, the Proſperity of their Souls and Bodies, that whatever is grievous and hurtful to them may be removed, that they may be made wiſe and good and comfortable, holy and happy here, and eternally happy hereafter.

Further, it includes Complacency, or a well Pleaſedneſs in the Good of others. We are to look upon their Advantages and Comforts, as if they were our own, and with the like Satisfaction, congratulating them thereupon, and as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, *Rom.* xii. 15. *Rejoyce with them that do rejoyce.* This ſhould be our Temper, and ſo far as Charity has got Poſſeſſion of our Minds, refin'd and ſweetned them, it is ſo; we do not look upon another's Good with an evil Eye, envying him for it, but being pleaſed with his Advantage, partake with him in the Enjoyment.

Again, it includes Beneficence, a Diſpoſition to do Good to others as we can, and this ſhewn in Facts anſwerable to the Occaſion and Call. And indeed where there is inward good Will, there will be outward good Deeds; if we wiſh the Welfare of our Neighbour, we ſhall be deſirous to contribute to it by all proper Methods. True Love and Charity will ſhew itſelf this Way; *Let us Love,* ſaith the Apoſtle, *not in Word nor in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth,* 1 John iii. 18. Charity will diſpenſe and give for the Aſſiſtance

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of others, its Goods to the Poor, its Comforts to the Afflicted, Protection to the Oppreſſed, Counſel to the Ignorant ; and as *Job* expreſſes it, *Chap.* xxix. 15. Be *Eyes to the Blind,* and *Feet to the Lame.*

Well, theſe are ſome of the chief Branches of Charity, let me only obſerve further that it is a catholick Grace. It muſt not be confin'd in its Exerciſe, but reach forth *its Bowels* to all Mankind, and *its Hand,* as far as it can. We are to Honour all Men, pity them in their Diſtreſſes, Miſeries, Snares, Temptations, wiſh them well, deſire and pray for their Good, and contribute what we are able towards it. *Let us, as we have Opportunity,* ſays the Apoſtle, *do Good to all Men, eſpecially to them who are of the Houſhold of Faith,* Galatians vi. 10. We are bound to love ſome more than others, and aſſiſt ſome rather than others ; but none ſhould be excluded out of our Charity, and the proper Exerciſes thereof. Different Opinions in Religion, different Modes of Profeſſion, and little accidental Varieties among good Men, ſhould not diſturb or interrupt their Charity ; nor ſhould ill Treatment from others, though real Enemies, extinguiſh our Charity towards them ; *many Waters* of this Kind muſt *not quench* the Flame of *Love.* The Precept is moſt expreſs here, and our Hearts ought to be formed into a Correſpondence therewith. *Matth.* v. 44. *I ſay unto you, love your Enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do Good to them that hate you, and pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you.* Indeed Charity will work differently, according to the State of the Object ; if it conſiders another as wiſe, good and happy in any Degree, it rejoyces and is pleas'd. If it conſiders him as wicked and vile, and as ſuch acting the Part of

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an Enemy, it ſtill pities him, and would be glad to cure and help, and do good againſt the Evil. O let us endeavour for this Charity, this divine triumphant Charity, it will make us like God now, and fit us for his Heaven hereafter.

II. Study it in the ſeveral Excellencies and Glories of it, as they are diſplayed in this Chapter; let me a little Re-touch them, that I may leave the Subject freſh upon your Minds; it may be of uſe to go over the Apoſtle's Deſcription of Charity in a brief and general Way.

And to begin with his firſt Character, ſee that your Charity be Long-ſuffering; ſuch as not only bears Provocations, but continues to bear them; that is, without taking Vengeance, without any undue Acts of Severity towards the Offender, or any undue Reſentments. We ſhould endeavour to be like God in this Reſpect, *gracious, merciful, Long-ſuffering, and ſlow to Anger.*

And then endeavour for the Kindneſs of Charity; it is Long-ſuffering and kind. Particularly we ſhould be kind and favourable in our Opinion and Sentiments of others, in our Judgments concerning them, in our Deſires, Wiſhes and Behaviour towards them. Charity has a kind, ſympathizing, compaſſionate Heart, and a liberal, bountiful Hand. It *rejoyces with thoſe that rejoyce, and weeps with thoſe that weep.* Conſiders *thoſe that are in Bonds, as bound with them,* Heb. xiii. 3. It moſt eſſentially lies in Benevolence and Goodwill, and where this is real, it will diſplay itſelf in a Concern for the Welfare of others, grieving for their Diſtreſſes and Miſeries, and in all proper Application for their Relief and Comfort.

Again, Charity envieth not, vaunteth not itſelf: Which is what we ſhould attend to, as among the Laws of Charity; not grudge or be uneaſy

uneaſy at the Advantages of our Neighbour, but be pleaſed with his Proſperity, his Succeſs, Honour, Riches and every Thing that appears good and comfortable to him. This Charity will do, and this we ſhould all do, were our Charity perfect and compleat. We are to *love our Neighbour as ourſelves.* And it is certain no Man envies himſelf, but is pleaſed with every Inſtance of his own Happineſs; and the ſame Complacency in the Good of our Neighbour ſhould be exerciſed towards him as we find towards ourſelves in our own Caſe.

And then, there is Humility and Modeſty in Charity, in all its Deportment towards others. It doth not vaunt itſelf and lift up itſelf above them, magnifying itſelf and depreſſing them.

Nor behave itſelf unſeemly, by inſulting, neglecting, deſpiſing them, or by any kind of rough and boiſterous Carriage.

Further, Our Charity muſt be attended with Self-denial. This is another eminent Property of it, *it ſeeketh not itſelf*, not its own Intereſt and Humour in Neglect of another, much leſs in Prejudice of another and his Intereſt; but is condeſcending and complying, foregoing and quitting its Claim on many Occaſions. Thus Charity wrought in the Heart of the Apoſtle, and accordingly formed his Conduct, 1 *Cor.* x. 33. I ſeek not mine own Profit, but the Profit of many, that they may be ſaved.

Again, It is ſaid of Charity, that it is not eaſily provoked, or is not greatly provoked; the Word notes what we call Paſſion, and the Meaning ſeems to be that Charity (divine Charity) will calm the Mind, ſweeten the Temper, will pauſe and conſider Things, conſider whether there is Reaſon to be angry, how far to be angry, and in what

what manner the Anger is to be expreſſed; and conſequently will not break out into a Flame, a ſudden and violent Flame, but moderate Reſentments. Indeed good Men, that have ſome Charity, may ſometimes give way to immoderate Paſſion; but then 'tis certain they are off their Guard, ſo far lay aſide their Charity, and get from under its Influence.

It follows, Charity *thinketh no Evil.* It doth not contrive Evil againſt others, doth not imagine or ſuſpect Evil concerning them, or it doth not impute Evil to them, charge it upon them raſhly, and without Grounds.

Nor doth it *rejoice in Iniquity*, in the Sin and Folly of others, *but rejoiceth in the Truth*, in their Integrity, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, their acting according to the Rules of the true Religion.

Again. Charity *beareth* or covereth *all Things*; covereth them with its Mantle, throwing a Vail over them. *Believeth* and *hopeth all Things*, all favourable and kind Things; And *endureth all Things*, or endures and holds out through all Diſcouragements.

This is Charity ſhining in its Bounties and Excellencies; the Purſuits of which I am now exhorting you to. A great deal belongs to it, as you may ſee from what has been hinted under this and the former Head. Now this Charity we ſhould endeavour to exerciſe in all the amiable Properties thereof. Be perſuaded to do ſo, often think over the Particulars of it, digeſt the whole Deſcription, and hold it before your Eyes, as a Glaſs by which to ſee your ſelves; your paſt Defects and Blemiſhes, and by which to dreſs your ſelves for the future.

3. Let your Charity be catholick and extenſive; not confined and limited by Humour or narrow

narrow Principles, but made to reach and include all its proper Objects.

And in the fulleſt Latitude of it, as I have already obſerved, all Mankind are to be taken in, as our Brethern in the ſame human Nature; *God having made of one Blood all Nations of Men, to dwell on the Face of the Earth*, Acts xvii. 26. All are in a near Relation, and under ſtrong Engagements to mutual Charity and Benevolence, and accordingly the Scripture frequently recommends the Duty in this Extent of it. We are to wiſh well to the whole human Race, to have a Concern for their Welfare, and rejoyce in it, to ſympathize with them in their Diſtreſſes, and according to our Capacity contribute to the Relief and Succour of them, not *hiding our ſelves from our own Fleſh*, as the Prophet expreſſes it, *Iſa.* lviii. 7.

But tho' all are Objects of our Charity, and none to be wholly excluded, yet it is more peculiarly due, and to be exerted towards Chriſtians; which the Apoſtle intimates, 1 Pet. ii. 17. *Honour all Men, love the Brotherhood.* And more directly, Gal. vi. 10. *As we have Opportunity, let us do good to all Men, eſpecially to ſuch as are of the Houſhold of Faith.* And here we are to take care that our Charity be not too much reſtrain'd; we ſhould love all the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus, all the Members of his Body; *This is my Commandment*, ſays he, *that you love one another*, John xv. 12. And again, *A new Commandment I give unto you, that you love one another*, John xiii. 34. He adds, ver. 35. *By this ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples, if you have love one to another.* Where it is plain that our Charity and Love, with the proper Effects thereof, is to extend as far as Diſcipleſhip to Chriſt. If any are Diſciples, they are to be loved and treated as ſuch.

And let me remark on this Occaſion, that the Sin of Schiſm the World has heard ſo much of, properly lies in the Violation of the Laws of Chriſtian Charity. When Chriſtians treat one another with Neglect and Contempt, much more when they unchriſtian one another, and reject thoſe whom Chriſt has received, they are guilty, in a very groſs manner, of Schiſm. Their Hearts are divided from one another; there's the Foundation of the Miſchief, conſequent upon which is Alienation, Eſtrangement and Diſtance, a Suſpenſion of all friendly Offices; nor doth the Evil ſtop here, but generally proceeds to Emulation, Wrath, Strife, and when a furious Zeal breaks looſe, as is often the Caſe, to Hatred, Malice, Perſecution, and all Sorts of Violence. Nor will there be an effectual Cure for this Malady, nor the Flames quenched that Schiſm has kindled, till the Grace of Charity, that greateſt of Graces, as the Apoſtle calls it, is allowed to interpoſe with its Kind and healing Influences. If it be objected that Charity can never take place till Chriſtians are united in the ſame Mind, Opinion, and Profeſſion; I anſwer, the Scripture ſuppoſes the contrary, that Chriſtians may live in Peace and Love though they have different Sentiments in Matters of leſs Moment in Religion. This is plain from innumerable Texts not now to be referred to, and particularly from Rom. xiv. 1. *He that is weak in the Faith receive you*, &c. *i. e.* tho' he be miſtaken in his Notions and Opinions, [in thoſe Points then in Diſpute] though he be a weak Chriſtian, yet if he be a Chriſtian receive him. He adds, ver. 2, 3. *One believeth he may eat all Things*; another, *who is weak, eats Herbs. Let not him that eateth, deſpiſe him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth, for God hath receiv-*

ed him. And having at large cenſured the uncharitable Principle then working in the Church, he ſubjoyns, ver. 17. *The Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink,* doth not conſiſt in Diſputes about theſe and other Points of the like kind, *but Righteouſneſs, Peace, Joy in the Holy Ghoſt; for he that in theſe Things ſerveth Chriſt is acceptable to God, and approved of Men.* The Foundation of Chriſtian Union lies deeper, and depends upon more important Things than little Controverſies and Speculations; Chriſtians are one, as having one God and Father, in whom they believe, and in whom they center; one Lord and Head, the Lord Jeſus; one Spirit, by whom they are baptized into one Body, all partaking of his ſanctifying Influences; one Faith in the great eſſential Articles of it, and as being called in one Hope of their Calling. Thus Chriſtians are one, and where there is this Union, all Acts of Communion, as far as Circumſtances will allow, and all Offices of Charity are due; and that notwithſtanding different Opinions in leſſer Matters, different Modes of Worſhip, or any little accidental Varieties among them. Nor indeed would the Union and mutual Charity of Chriſtians be poſſible, (ſo far as I can ſee) did it depend upon an entire Agreement in nice Opinions and Speculations in Religion. This one may infer from the Experience of paſt Ages, and even from the State and Circumſtances of Mankind, from their different Capacities, Educations, Converſe, and the like, which will unavoidably iſſue in different Sentiments, unleſs we ſuppoſe a ſpecial Interpoſition of Heaven to over-rule their Thoughts and determine their Minds.

In ſhort, nothing ſhould divide Chriſtians from one another, (divide them, I mean, in Heart and Affection) but what may be thought to divide them

them from Chriſt. We are to love all Chriſtians as ſuch, and be ever diſpoſed to join in that of the Apoſtle, Eph. vi. 24. *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in Sincerity.* O let us ſtudy this Catholick large Charity! Whenever it is diffuſed through the Chriſtian Church it will be the Glory of it. It will either end or moderate all Differences; ſet Chriſtians at Liberty for ſuch mutual good Services and Offices as their Profeſſion calls them to, and be the Strength and Ornament of their Community.

In the mean time let us cheriſh the divine and excellent Grace in our own Breaſts. We ſhould be Lovers of Mankind, and eſpecially of the Houſhold of Faith, the City of the Saints and Family of God. Our Minds ſhould be full of Benevolence towards this bleſſed Society, praying for the Peace of *Jeruſalem*, preferring her to our *chiefeſt Joy*, and *ſeeking her Good* always. And then we ſhould be ready in all proper Inſtances, as we have Opportunity and Leave, to teſtify our Union with, and Charity towards this Body, holding Communion with the whole in Faith, Hope, Love, Prayer, and good Wiſhes, and with every part of it in external Acts of Communion, (ſo far as we may) and in the Exchange of all kind and good Offices.

In fine, the Charity deſcribed in this Chapter is to be exerciſed towards all Chriſtians, as their and our Occaſions and Circumſtances will admit; that Charity that ſuffers long and is kind, a forbearing, forgiving, beneficent Charity. And though we cannot alike reach all with our Charity, our Deſires of Good muſt however extend to all; and whilſt we are loving our nearer Brethren, this muſt be done as a ſort of an earneſt of what we owe to all the Church, the whole Body of the Faithful,

Faithful, and are desirous to pay as we can. O study and cultivate this Temper! 'Tis (as I said) most directly opposite to the odious Sin of Schism; an eminent Branch of the Gospel Spirit; and whatever Discouragement we may meet with in the Exercise of such Catholick Love from Hypocrites or Bigots; as 'tis granted there is a great deal, 'tis in itself a very great Blessing, something divine, full of Comfort and Peace, and carries its own Reward with it. And we may consider, (if Men will not suffer us to love them in this World; that is, to express our Love according to Christian Principles and Rules) such a Temper will dispose and fit for Heaven, where Charity will have its full Scope without any Damp or Check.

You will excuse me that I have run out so far upon this Head; I apprehend such Principles to be of the utmost Moment to Religion. And though they may not be admitted in the Church in its present State of Carnality and Schism, (in which it is wofully involv'd) I doubt not they will have a Revival. In the mean while so friendly and comfortable is their Influence on every Mind that receiveth them, that they well deserve your Attention and Care. To proceed:

4. Guard against every thing that would hurt your Charity and hinder the Exercise of it; particularly, guard against an inward Contempt of others. Love is grounded on Estimation, as was said before; and if that be wanting, your Charity will of course die or languish; keep up therefore as good an Opinion as you can of others. But you will say, must we think well of bad Men, vile and wicked Persons? I answer, we must not readily conclude Persons to be wicked and vile, and never without sufficient Evidence, lest we be

guilty of ſinful and raſh judging. I anſwer farther, none are ſo bad, but they have ſome Good in them, and conſequently ſomething to deſerve and demand our Love; as they are rational and immortal Creatures, made after the Image of God, they have a Dignity and Excellency in them. And if they have depraved themſelves, and are become vitious and bad, ſtill Charity is due to them; as Men they deſerve it, and as corrupt and miſerable they need it. And though you cannot love them with a full Complacency, you may however love them with Benevolence and Pity, pray for them, wiſh and endeavour to help them.

Let me add by way of Caution here, that we ſhould take care, we do not under this *Pretence* exclude from our Charity the Good as well as Bad. It would be ſad if we exclude any becauſe they are good, becauſe of their real Virtues and Excellencies, which yet is a very common Caſe. Nor ſhould we exclude them becauſe of their Infirmities; ſuppoſe them really ſuch; yet if they are pardonable, conſiſtent with their Goodneſs, Charity ſhould come in, covering Defects with its Vail, believing and hoping all Things.

In a Word, if we would be charitable towards our Brethren, we muſt think as well of them as we can; not that we can think of all alike; nor can we embrace and love all alike; (we ought not;) but we muſt have a care of diſfiguring any proper Objects of Charity, repreſenting them in odious Colours, leſt we ſhould hate where we ſhould love.

Again. Guard againſt ſchiſmatical Principles and Opinions. Some are ſo ſadly tainted here, that whatever the Scripture ſaith of loving others, loving their Brethren, they preſently apply to their own little *Party*; as if Religion was nothing, unleſs

leſs it was diſtinguiſhed with their Peculiarities, which, it may be, are Whims and Fancies; I do not ſay inconſiſtent with Religion, but however a Diminution and Diſgrace to it. Enlarge your Minds, and love Chriſt in all his Members, whether they wear your diſtinguiſhing Badge or not.

We ſhould alſo guard againſt Contention and Diſcord, and every Thing that tends to break and diſturb the Peace of the Church; for when Peace is loſt, Charity generally ſuffers and falls with it. And to this Purpoſe let me exhort you to beware of a diſputing Humour, *ſtriving about Words to no Profit*, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, 2 *Tim.* ii. 14. Many of thoſe Queſtions that Perſons of this Stamp buſy themſelves with, are of no Moment; a Man may hold either Side of them, and yet be a wiſe and good Man; they are what the Apoſtle calls *fooliſh and unlearned Queſtions that gender Strife*, 2 Tim. ii. 23. Indeed ſome may be of greater Weight; but then they are involv'd in ſo much Difficulty and Darkneſs, as ſets them above moſt Men's Capacities to decide; conſequently diſputing here has no other Tendency but to confound and diſtract Mens Minds; ſet them and keep them at Variance, and deſtroy their Charity. Nor will it be well for the Chriſtian Church till the Members of it divert their Zeal from barren Controverſies, and employ it about the greater Things of Religion, the *weightier Matters of the Law*; till they *follow the Things that make for Peace, and whereby they may edify one another*; till inſtead of provoking one another's Paſſions, by a wrangling about Things they underſtand not, they endeavour to *provoke one another to Love and good Works*. Let us attend our Duty herein. And

5. In the laſt Place, make ſuitable Application both to God and your ſelves for the Defence and Improvement of your Charity.

There is ſo much Oppoſition in our Hearts naturally to this divine Virtue, and ſo much ſtill remaining even with the ſanctified, that we need Help from Heaven to overcome it, and form our Minds to the Sweetneſs, Kindneſs, and Goodneſs there is in it. Look up therefore to God for Help. *The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs,* Gal. v. 22. Charity or Love is his Work, and of his Operation; call in his Aſſiſtance therefore; beg that (as was ſaid of the *Theſſalonians*) you may be *taught of God to love one another,* 1 Theſſ. iv. 9. That every Degree of Enmity may be removed; and all Wrath, Bitterneſs, Envy, and Malice wrought out of your Temper; and that divine Charity may diffuſe itſelf through the Soul, and fill every Faculty.

And then apply to your ſelves for this Purpoſe. Obſerve and cenſure every Motion contrary to the Laws of Charity; cenſure it, bewail it, and carry your Complaint before God, pleading for his Help and Succour; his rectifying Influences, and that he would *renew a right Spirit within you.* This is the way (Chriſtians) to grow in Grace, in every Grace, and particularly in the Grace before us. Obſerve and deal with your own Hearts, and at the ſame time look upward, waiting for the Word of Life and Power from above. What remains is,

II. To propoſe ſome Arguments or Motives to inforce the Exhortation, and recommend to you the Purſuit of Charity. And

1. Let me again put you upon conſidering how important a Grace this is. You ſee it is here mentioned

tioned as one of the three ſelect Graces. *Now abideth Faih, Hope, Charity, theſe three*; which are all fundamental Graces (as I obſerved before) concern the very Life and Being of the Chriſtian, on which Account ('tis probable) the Apoſtle is pleaſed thus to diſtinguiſh them. Other Graces abide, but theſe eſpecially; we are to guard the whole new Man, the entire Syſtem of divine Graces, Meekneſs, Patience, and the reſt; but above all Faith, Hope, and Charity. A Chriſtian ſuffers, if any of the Graces fail him in the Exerciſe; but if his Faith, Hope, or Charity fail, he is like one that has received a Wound in the vital Part.

And then as Charity is one of the three, ſo it is ſet above the other, and preferred to them (as was alſo remark'd before.) *The greateſt of theſe is Charity*. 'Tis the greateſt in ſeveral Reſpects; as it refers to others, is a generous beneficial Grace; Faith is more confin'd to our ſelves, Charity extends itſelf to many. A Man lives by his own Faith; others are ſupplied and helped to live by his Charity. It looks beyond our own Concerns, and ſpreads its kind Influences among Mankind. But 'tis the greateſt, eſpecially as it outlaſts the reſt. Faith gives way to Viſion and Light in the other World; Hope iſſues in preſent, immediate, full Enjoyment, but Charity never fails, it reigns in the Regions above, and through all the Ages of Eternity.

Add hereto the mighty Streſs the New-Teſtament every where lays upon it; 'tis repreſented as of the moſt abſolute Neceſſity, as you ſee particularly in the three firſt Verſes of this Chapter. Again. It is in a peculiar manner a Goſpel Grace, being eſpecially adapted and ſuited to the Genius and Spirit of the Goſpel, and very much inſiſted

upon by the Author of it; hence Christ calls it his Commandment, John xv. 12. *This is my Commandment, that you love one another, even as I loved you.* And elsewhere he calls it a new Commandment, *John* xiii. 34. Not that it is absolutely new; 'tis a Law of Nature, and always was, and will be of unalterable Obligation: But 'tis new as it is revived, farther explained and enforced. The Sense of it was very much lost in the World, narrowed and obscured under the old *Jewish* Dispensation of Religion, which though it did not allow Uncharitableness, (that cannot be said) yet it may be said it did not provide so much against it, nor did it savour so much of universal Love and Charity as the Gospel doth. *Elias* called for Fire from Heaven to destroy his Enemies; when the Disciples would have done the like, Christ tells them, *they knew not what manner of Spirit they were of*, Luke ix. 55. which may be understood to import that they did not consider the Spirit of the Gospel which they professed, that forbids all Bitterness and Revenge, and by the Rules and Laws of which they were to conduct themselves. *The Lord look upon it and require it*, said *Zachariah*, when he was suffering and dying by the Rage of his Enemies, 2 *Chron.* xxiv. 22. But *Stephen* the first Martyr under the new Testament, breathed a different Spirit, *Lord*, says he, *lay not this Sin to their Charge*, Acts vii. 60. The Spirit the Gospel enjoins and inspires, (what must and doth obtain among the sincere Professors of it) is a Spirit of Love and Goodness. *This is my Commandment, that you love one another*; 'tis the governing Law and Maxim of the Gospel of Christ, the greatest Distinction both of his Religion and Disciples.

I might observe, as it is his Command, so he has set it very high, in that Account he has given

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of it, in the xxii^d Chapter of St. *Matthew*, ver. 39. Where having told us, that to *love the Lord our God with all the Heart*, with all the *Soul*, and with all the *Mind*, is *the first and great Commandment*; he ſubjoins, *the ſecond is like unto it, thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.* The Love of our Neighbour is ſo great a thing, that there is nothing above it in Religion (as he there intimates) but the Love of God; this is the next great Commandment, and *ſecond* to the *firſt*. A great deal more occurs to the ſame Purpoſe in the New Teſtament; *the End of the Commandment*, ſays the Apoſtle, *is Charity out of a pure Heart, a good Conſcience and Faith unfeigned*, 1 Tim. i. 5. This is the End the Goſpel refers to and aims at, the whole Scheme of its Religion is calculated to promote ſuch a Temper in its Profeſſors. Nor is it impertinent to obſerve in the preſent Argument, that the Apoſtle *Peter* concludes his Liſt, and finiſhes his Chain of Graces with this of Charity, 2 Pet. i. 7. *Add to your Faith Virtue, to Virtue Knowledge, to Knowledge Temperance, to Temperance Patience, to Patience Godlineſs, to Godlineſs brotherly Kindneſs, and to brotherly Kindneſs Charity.* He begins with *Faith*, and ends with *Charity*; the one is the Foundation, the other the Top Stone, the Crown and Perfection of a Chriſtian (as it were.) Let us conſider this, and not leave out of our Religion what the Founder of it has made moſt eſſential to it. Nothing more foreign to the Goſpel than Wrath, Malice, Hatred, and Cruelty; nothing more appropriate to it than Charity or Love, with all the proper Fruits and Effects thereof. In ſhort, this is one of the moſt important Graces of our Religion; nor are our Hearts and Minds form'd according to the Rules and Laws of it any further than as Love and Benevolence prevails in them. And then

2. Conſider, as Charity is a moſt important neceſſary Grace, and the peculiar diſtinguiſhing Grace of the Goſpel; ſo it brings a great deal of Peace and Comfort to thoſe that are under the Influence and Power of it. This it doth ſeveral ways, as might be ſhewn at large; to inſtance in a Particular or two.

It doth ſo, as it is an eminent Branch of the Rectitude of the Soul; reduces it to its original and firſt State. Man was made for Love, made to love God and love his Neighbour. To this the human Nature hath a ſtrong Propenſity and Inclination, which we ſhould all have found, had not our Apoſtacy diſordered and perverted the original State of Things. Now divine Love planted in the Soul ſets it aright, brings it to its natural State, divinely natural, as I may expreſs it. And this will in courſe infer an inward Complacency and Satisfaction. Hereupon the Soul finds itſelf calm and eaſy, as being in its right Temper; and I may add never before. There is indeed a ſort of Peace that Men maintain whilſt under the Power of their Luſts, whilſt they are *fooliſh and diſobedient, living in Malice and Envy, hateful, and hating one another*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Tit.* iii. 3. But this is a falſe Peace, a Sham and Deluſion owing to Inſenſibility; the Scripture will not allow it that Name, but expreſly tells us *there's no Peace to the Wicked*, Iſa. xlviii. 22. But when we are recovered to our ſelves in Sanctification, of which Love to God and Love to Men are eminent Branches, we are then (ſo far as this is the Caſe with us) at Peace in our own Minds. The Soul is what it was deſign'd to be, according to the Law of its Creation; its Temper and Motions are regular and divine, and conſequently comfortable and peaceful.

Again.

Again. This divine Charity brings Peace with it as it baniſhes thoſe turbulent boiſterous Paſſions from the Mind that diſcompoſe and diſturb it, as Anger, Malice, Rancour, Envy, Revenge, and the like. Love will not ſuffer theſe to harbour in our Breaſts, is inconſiſtent with them, and frees us from them, and conſequently delivers us from the greateſt Inſtruments of our Diſquietude and Torture; and at the ſame time introduces a Serenity and Calmneſs within, the Peace of God (or a divine Peace) that paſſes all Underſtanding. Hence that of the Apoſtle, the *Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace,* Gal. v. 22. Firſt Love, and thereupon follow Joy and Peace. If the bleſſed Spirit has implanted Love with its Benevolence, Kindneſs and Beneficence, Joy and Peace will ſucceed and flow from it, and will be in Proportion to the Degree of divine Love or Charity in the Soul.

Further. This charitable Temper will ſecure and promote our Peace as it renders us a fit Habitation of the holy Spirit. It is he works it in the Soul, and he delights moſt to dwell with it; He will take up his Abode in thoſe Hearts where Love reigns; therefore when we are exhorted *not to grieve the Spirit of God,* Eph. iv. 30. It is immediately added, *Let all Bitterneſs and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and evil Speaking be put away from you with all Malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven you,* Ver. 31, 32. intimating that Bitterneſs, Wrath, *&c.* would grieve the good Spirit of God; and that if we would not grieve him, but would have his Preſence, enjoy his Influences and Comforts, we muſt cheriſh a contrary Diſpoſition; be kind one to another, (as 'tis there expreſſed) tender hearted, full of Benevolence,

nevolence, Compaſſion and Goodneſs. The Spirit when he deſcended from Heaven, appeared in the Likeneſs of a Dove, *Matth.* iii. 16. to ſignify his Nature, which is Meekneſs, Gentleneſs, and Love, and alſo where he is likely to reſide, namely, where there is moſt of this Temper.

There is not, I think, a greater Abſurdity and Inconſiſtency in the World than that of a certain Church that pretends to an higher Conduct of this Spirit than any of its Neighbours, ſo as to intitle him to all their Deciſions about Religion, and yet the ſame Body of Men breathe nothing but Deſtruction and Cruelty, write their Decrees and Laws in Blood, and enforce them by an Inquiſition, the Methods of which are a Reproach to the human Nature. 'Tis ſtrange they ſhould have the Spirit of Infallibility, and be ſo little acquainted with the Spirit of Holineſs and Peace; and methinks it is pity the Spirit ſhould communicate *ſo much Light*, (as they vainly pretend) and *ſo little Love* to them.

But let us not deceive our ſelves here, the Spirit of God is a Spirit of Love and of Peace, firſt of Love and then of Peace; and if we would enjoy his Peace, we muſt ſtudy and acquire Love. O conſider this, and beg that more of divine Love and Charity may be wrought into your Temper. It may be one Reaſon, why ſome good People that take a great deal of Pains in Religion, and with their own Hearts in other Reſpects, complain ſo much of Darkneſs and Diſconſolation is, that they do not cheriſh and cultivate Benevolence and Charity. *Walk in Love*, ſays the Apoſtle, *be of one Mind, live in Peace, and the God of Love and Peace ſhall be with you.* 'Tis an high Expreſſion, and full of Inſtruction, which you find 1 John iv. 16. *God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth*

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in God, and God in him. If you would dwell in God, and have God dwell with you, and in you by his Spirit, and enjoy the Comfort of so glorious a Guest, study Charity and Love, dwell in it, let it be your Element and Delight, and put away every thing of a contrary Nature and Allay.

Again. 'Tis among the Advantages of this charitable Temper to promote our Peace, that it will make our Converse in the World, if not generally pleasant, yet, at least, less troublesome and hurtful. If you carry divine Love along with you, in all your Converse, you will not assault others, and provoke their Passions, nor will your own be easily excited. It will exclude Wrath, Anger, and which is the great Mischief of Conversation, Defamation and Reproach. Charity will sweeten the Temper, and render it sociable and friendly. And as you will not provoke those you converse with, so you will not injure those you converse about; but as is said of the virtuous Woman, *Prov.* xxxi. 26. You will *open* your *Mouth with Wisdom and in* your *Tongue* will be the *Law of Kindness.* Charity has no unwarrantable Jealousies and Suspicions of others, no sorry Passions to gratify, it believes and hopes the best, and speaks the best it can. And who sees not the happy Consequence of such a Temper, and of a Conduct formed according thereto? Man was made for Society, he needs it, and it is plain, seeks it; a great deal of Time is necessarily spent in Conversation; now if we would improve this Scene of Life, which takes in so much of it, fill it with Charity, this may make it pleasant and profitable both to yourselves and others, at least it will guard your Converse, and prevent that Ruffle and Discomposure you are apt to receive from it.

Once

Once more, Love and Charity promotes the Peace of our Minds, and makes for the Peace of our Lives, as it in a great Meaſure diſarms our Enemies. *Who is he that will harm you, if you be Followers of that which is Good?* 1 Pet. iii. 13. If we follow not only that which is juſt, but good, and our Behaviour has a manifeſt Kindneſs and Benignity in it, and proceeds according to the Rules of Charity, it will very much protect us from the Inſults and Injuries even of the worſt of Men. Their Paſſions may ſometimes ſally out, but ſuch a Temper perſevered in, will at Length ſubdue or ſilence them. *Vincit malos pertinax bonitas*, ſays *Seneca*, a reſolute Goodneſs and Charity overcomes even bad Men, which the Scripture alſo intimates, when it bids us *heap Coals of Fire* upon our Enemy's Head, and *not to be overcome of Evil, but to overcome Evil with Good*, Rom. xii. 20, 21. The Reaſon why we do not ſee this oftner in Fact (though indeed it is often ſeen) is becauſe we want Patience and Firmneſs ſteddily to purſue a Courſe of Goodneſs, Kindneſs and Charity through all Diſcouragements, when others are outrageous and injurious, their Paſſions ſtir up ours, and ſo Charity is diſabled, and becomes fruitleſs. But ordinarily the Victory it obtains is certain and evident, I mean when Charity holds out: How did *Jacob* by his Mildneſs and Goodneſs, ſubdue the Rage and Fierceneſs of his Brother *Eſau*, inſomuch that he *ran to meet him, embraced him, fell on his Neck, and kiſſed him?* Gen. xxxiii. 4. And by the ſame Methods *David* conquered *Saul*, notwithſtanding the Malice he had in his Heart againſt him. *Is this the Voice of my Son David?* ſays Saul, *and he lift up his Voice and wept, ſaying to* David, *thou art more Righteous than I, for thou haſt rewarded me Good,*

Good, whereas I have rewarded thee Evil, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. However, if you do not ſo conquer them as to gain them, you may yet get the better of them; (which I grant is all the Victory that in ſome Caſes we can propoſe, at leaſt by our defective Charity) this you will do, if you guard your own Paſſions, and preſerve Charity alive and in Exerciſe, in the midſt of all Provocations.

Thus you ſee how great a Grace Charity is, of how much Account in the New Teſtament, and under the Goſpel Diſpenſation, and how beneficial and comfortable to ourſelves; therefore follow after Charity, and endeavour to abound in it more and more: *great Peace have they that love* the *Law* of God (this Law in particular) *and nothing ſhall offend them.*

3. Conſider that Charity (or Love to Mankind as God's Creatures, Love to good Men as his Sons, with the genuine Fruits and Effects thereof; which is what I mean by Charity) is an eminent part of the divine Image, and is made the great Evidence of a regenerate, renewed, divine State. I take notice of this, that none of you may think ſlightly of it, as one of the lower Graces of Chriſtianity, which yet I think you cannot well do, after what has been ſaid. It is, I ſay, a great Mark of our Sonſhip, of our new Birth, or partaking of the divine Nature; thus the Scripture, particularly the Apoſtle *John*, frequently ſpeaks of it; *Beloved, let us love one another, for Love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.* It follows on the other Hand, *he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love,* 1 John iv. 7, 8. Where it is obvious to obſerve ſuch Things as theſe, that love is derived from God; hence he that loveth is ſaid to be born

of

of God; and elsewhere it is said to be the Fruit of the Spirit, as distinguished from Hatred, Wrath, Strife, *Gal.* v. 22. It is a certain Proof of a divine Impression and Birth; such in whom Love and Charity, in the proper Extent thereof, prevail, are born of God; which is the Argument the Apostle in another Place of this Epistle makes use of, *Chap.* iii. 14. *We know that we have passed from Death to Life, because we love the Brethren; he that loveth not his Brother, abideth in Death.* And as it derives its Original from God, it carries in it a Resemblance of him; it is a God-like Nature communicated; his Goodness and Love is the Fountain from whence all Things flowed and his Benignity, Mercy, Forbearance, the Preservers of them; it is of his Mercy we are not consumed, and because his Compassions fail not. His Charity or Love issues forth freely and graciously in constant Streams of Bounty towards his Creatures, supplying, enriching, forbearing them, without any Prospect of Advantage to himself, and without any Merit on their Part; which our Saviour sets before us as the Pattern and Motive of our Love; *I say unto you, love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, that you may be the Children of your Father which is in Heaven; for he maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just, and on the Unjust,* Matth. v. 44, 45. Adding, *ver.* 48. *Be therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.* Where he also intimates, that such a Disposition is God-like, and argues that we are his Sons; *that you may be the Children,* says he, *of your Father which is in Heaven,* according to the Text of St. *John, God is Love, and he that loveth is born of God,* he *knoweth* him, resembles him, and partakes of his

his Nature, as a Child does of that of a Father. On the other Hand, you see the Apostle makes the want of this divine Love, an Argument of utter Estrangement from God; *he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love*; and again, *he that loveth not his Brother abideth in Death.* So that you find, this is not a Matter of little Moment, but what concerns the very Vitals of Religion; it is the divine Nature impressed, and the great Evidence of our Sonship, of our Relation to God as his Children. Let us not therefore neglect it, or be cool or indifferent about it; God is Love, and they that are born of God, cannot be wholly destitute of Love: So much of God as they have, so much Love they have.

4. I might offer to your Consideration, by way of Motive, the Example of many great and illustrious Persons, who have excelled in this Grace, and gone before us in the Displays of the most glorious Charity. It is said of *Socrates*, (one of the most celebrated Moralists among the *Heathen*, and by the Account we have of him, one of the greatest Men out of the Church) that he professed to know nothing but to love; and accordingly, assumed this as his Character and Motto, Θεραπων ἐρωτος, the Servant of Love, or a Cultivator and Student of Love and Charity. And if you look into the Church you will find the more eminent any have been, the brighter and warmer their Charity.

The great Head of the Church, the Son of God himself, who most nearly resembled him, being the express Image of his Person, *Heb.* i. 3. breathed nothing but Love, Goodness and Charity to Mankind, whilst among them. Love brought him down from Heaven, carried him through a Train of most amazing Sufferings,

nailed him to the Croſs, and you know how wonderfully it iſſued forth there, even towards his worſt Enemies that had purſued him with their Rage and Malice unto Death: *Father, forgive them,* ſays he, *for they know not what they do.* Now herein he hath *ſet us an Example, that we ſhould follow his Steps;* we are *to walk in Love, as Chriſt alſo loved us and gave himſelf for us, an Offering and Sacrifice to God, for a ſweet-ſmelling Savour,* Epheſ. v. 2. His Love is to be the Rule, the Meaſure, and Motive of ours, and if it be ſo, it will make a glorious Change in the Frame of our Minds, and Courſe of our Actions.

I might produce a Multitude more, a whole *Cloud of Witneſſes,* who have recommended Charity to us, and been themſelves eminent Examples of it. With what Zeal and vigorous Love did *Moſes* purſue the Intereſt of the People he was concerned with and for? He bore their Manners with incredible Patience, his Charity ſtruggling againſt the greateſt Diſcouragements, accounting no Trouble and Expence too great, ſo he might do them good, and ſerve them in Love. And not to mention other Particulars, what ſhall we ſay to that ſtrange Inſtance of his Charity? *Exod.* xxxii. 32. When the People had expoſed themſelves to the Diſpleaſure of God, he ſtands between them, and the divine Wrath ready to break out upon them, and would give up his own Intereſt in the ſpecial Favour of Providence, rather than they ſhould be rejected and abandoned; *Forgive their Sin, O Lord,* ſays he, *or blot me out of thy Book, which thou haſt written.*

So *Samuel,* after the moſt ungrateful Requital of all his Care and Kindneſs for the People over whom he preſided, his Charity ſtill perſeveres

and breaks through the Obſtruction they had thrown in its way. *God forbid*, ſays he, *I ſhould ſin againſt the Lord in ceaſing to pray for you*, 1 Sam. xii. 23. Still reſolving if he could not do them good, he would wiſh them well.

The Time would fail me to tell of *David*, the Prophets, Apoſtles, and all the Worthies that have appeared in the Church, and adorned it with this among other Graces. For Inſtance, (to omit others) how charitable was St. *Paul*? He ſought not his own Profit, but the Profit of many, that they might be ſaved; his Life was ſpent in the Service of the Church, and his Comfort wrapt up in their Welfare and Proſperity; *We live*, ſays he, *if ye ſtand faſt in the Lord*; and again, 2 *Cor.* xii. 15. *I will very gladly ſpend, and be ſpent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the leſs I be loved.* And when he came to reflect upon the Caſe of his poor blinded Countrymen the *Jews*, his Zeal and Charity riſes to a Height that it has ſeem'd a Difficulty to defend it; *I could wiſh myſelf accurſed from Chriſt*, ſays he, *for my Brethren, my Kinſmen according to the Fleſh*, Rom. ix. 3.

This has been the Spirit of the Church; let us compare our Spirits therewith, and endeavour to bring them to a greater Correſpondence thereunto. God is Love, and the Children of God, they who are born of him, and dwell in him, are in their Meaſure Love too. O beg that God would ſhed abroad this Love in your Hearts, enlarge your Minds, deliver you from Selfiſhneſs and all unfriendly Paſſions, and fill your Hearts with Benevolence and Chriſtian Charity.

5. You may conſider the happy Influence this Grace, did it more generally take Place in the Minds of Men, would have upon Society; upon

the State of the World and the Church. *Above all Things*, ſays the Apoſtle, *put on Charity which is the Bond of Perfectneſs*, or the moſt perfect Bond, *Coloſ.* iii. 14. It is the ſtrongeſt and beſt Cement of Society; it ſoftens Mens Tempers, fits them for Society, prevents Breaches, or heals them when made; cauſes a general Circulation of kind and good Offices, which are the Defence, Ornament and Comfort of Society. In ſhort, this is the Thing (the Spirit of Holineſs and Love) that muſt unite the Chriſtian Church, and put an End to the Schiſms and Broils that ſo much diſturb it; nor do I think any human Means will be ſufficient without this. When the Hearts of Men are more united, their Heads ſoon will. In the mean time contribute what you can to this Purpoſe, eſpecially in the reſpective Spheres in which you move, among your Neighbours, Families, and Chriſtian Brethren; converſe according to the Laws of Charity, and then you will leſs grieve others, and be leſs grieved by them. Charity will either prevent or arbitrate and end your Differences; will keep the Peace, or ſoon reſtore it; or if herein you ſhould be diſappointed, *your Peace* will *return to you* (to uſe the Expreſſion of our Lord on another Occaſion, *Luke* x. 6.) You will enjoy the Comfort of it in your own Minds, and the Bleſſings that belong to the Sons of Peace. To conclude.

6, And laſtly, conſider that Charity is an eminent Grace in the State above, and greatly tends to fit us for that State. Charity never faileth, it is one of the Graces of Heaven, as I ſhewed before, hinting at the ſame Time how it is exerciſed and employed in that happy World. There is all Piety and Charity there, nothing but Devotion to God, and Love to one another; every Thing

Thing of the contrary Allay is excluded, Wrath and Malice ceaſe, Diſcord is at an End, and all Shyneſs and Diſtance removed. In the new *Jeruſalem*, among the reſt of the Evils they are freed from, this is one, that there ſhall be no more Clamour; as the Word, Κραυγὴ, *Rev.* xxi. 4. ſometimes ſignifies; and as ſome underſtand it in that Place, there ſhall be *no more Crying*, ſo we tranſlate it; but it may as well be read no more Clamour. All Clamour and every Degree of Enmity, with the Fruits thereof, will be over in Heaven; that is the Region and Element of Love; nor is there one Soul there that is not moulded and framed according to the Laws of perfect Love and Charity. Now you ſhould conſider (for therein lies the Force of my preſent Argument) that our meetneſs for Heaven conſiſts in a Temper adapted to the Work and Buſineſs of it; whence it is evident, nothing doth more concern us as Probationers for Heaven, and Expectants of Heaven, than the cultivating this Grace of Charity. We now need Faith, Hope, Patience, Temperance, and the like, but in Heaven we ſhall not need theſe Graces and Virtues, there will be no occaſion for them; whereas Charity and divine Love, (Love to God and Love to the Saints) is a main Part of Heaven, of its Buſineſs and of its Happineſs; ſhould we want this, we ſhould be uneaſy in Heaven itſelf; diſturb'd with others Advancements, and diſcontent with our own States; we ſhould not know how to keep tune with the Bleſſed Above, nor Reliſh ſome of their chiefeſt Joys.

Well, conſider this, conſider all theſe Things, reflect on what you have heard on this Subject, with that Attention, Seriouſneſs and Application the Matter deſerves, and may the God of Love

and Grace inſpire your Hearts with that divine gracious Principle I have been endeavouring to recommend to you, help you to live in the Exerciſe and under the Influence of it all your Days here below, and at laſt admit you into the glorious Realms above, where Love and Charity will univerſally have Place, and be triumphant for ever.

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5 DE60

The

The Thirteenth Chapter of the Firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians* paraphras'd in Blank Verſe. By another Hand.

THO' I could ſpeak with perfect Myſtery,
All Languages in Uſe throughout the Earth;
The higheſt Beauties gracing all my Words,
And ſweeteſt Accents dwelling on my Tongue;
Nay, tho' I had the Utterance and Voice
Of Angels bleſt, melodious Quire of Heaven;
If yet I wanted Charity, my Speech
Were vile, and worthy of no more Regard
Than ſounding Braſs, or tinkling Cymbal's Noiſe.

Did I enjoy the Gift of Prophecy,
And had a vaſt capacious Soul, enrich'd
With boundleſs Knowledge, fathoming the Depths
Of Truth celeſtial, Myſteries Divine;
Had I all Faith, and by the Force thereof
Cou'd Mountains move, and ſhift from Place to Place;
If ſtill I'm deſtitute of Charity,
My Knowledge and my Faith are empty Things,
And I am nothing in the Sight of God.

Exclude this Grace, and every Virtue's loſt;
Tho' with profuſeſt Hand I feed the Poor,
Exhauſting all my Subſtance in Relief;
Tho' in a Tranſport of religious Zeal,
I ſhould embrace the Flames of Martyrdom;
This Zeal, that Bounty both are thrown away,
And Life and Wealth are ſacrific'd in vain.

Num-

Numberleſs Beauties Charity adorn,
And various Virtues round about her ſhine;
Kindneſs, Forbearance, Gentleneſs and Love,
Inſeparably attend her; much ſhe bears
With Meekneſs, unprovok'd endures
A thouſand Wrongs, and full of courteous Hope,
Interprets all Things by the faireſt Rules.

Whoever entertains this heavenly Gueſt,
Muſt purge his Heart from every loathſome Vice,
Unſpotted is the Soul where ſhe reſides.
The charitable Man is ever free
From envious Thoughts and fretful Diſcontent;
With Pleaſure he beholds his Neighbour riſe,
And takes Delight in his Proſperity.

Tho' conſcious of his own Advantages,
No ſwelling Thoughts engender in his Breaſt;
No ſcornful vaunting Words pollute his Speech,
Nor ſupercilious Looks deform his Brow;
He thinks and ſpeaks, and looks with equal Mo-
No baſe or unbecoming Actions ſtain (deſty.
His Conduct, which unblemiſh'd, unreprov'd
Remains above the Cenſure of the World.

He's led by no ſiniſter, ſelfiſh Ends,
But ſeeks the common Benefit of all,
Greatly devoted to the Publick Good.
No Lyes can pleaſe, no ſpiteful Rumours find
Acceptance with him, Proſelyte of Truth.
He hates Detraction, and where Guilt he ſees,
He ſees it not with Joy, but Grief unfeign'd;
As touch'd with deep Concern for what he knows,
Diſhonours God, and brings a Curſe on Men.

All other Gifts their Times and Periods know,
Will vaniſh all at length and diſappear;

The

The Gifts of Tongues, of Prophecy will ceaſe,
And heavenly Inſpiration be no more.
The Arts of Men, and all Inventions fail;
All the Productions of the Mind will die,
And be in dark Oblivion ſwallowed up.
But Charity will never fail, nor here,
Nor in the World to come, but ſtill ſurvive
Victorious, and will to endleſs Ages laſt.

Defective is all Knowledge here below;
The Underſtanding toils, and ſtrives in vain
To graſp thoſe Objects which it cannot graſp.
It ſeeks and beats about to find the Truth
With weary Chace, and runs a fruitleſs Round.
But when our future Perfect State arrives,
Our Notions will be clear'd, our Minds enlarg'd,
And all our Imperfections done away.

So long as Childhood laſts, we think and ſpeak
Like Children; but as Age and Years come on,
Our Underſtandings ripen into Senſe,
And all our Infant Thoughts are at an end.
Thus will our Minds in Heaven be lifted up
To nobler Knowledge, which no leſs exceeds
Our preſent, than the Wiſdom of grown Man
Surpaſſes the Attainments of a Child.

What now we know, is doubtful and obſcure;
Our Minds are dark, and our Ideas dim;
As in Perſpective's miſty Light, we ſee
The Object faintly twinkles in the Eye,
And never more than part of it appears.

But in the glorious Realms of Bliſs above,
No Clouds or Darkneſs will obſtruct the Sight:
There every radiant Object will be ſeen
By Intuition, Angels Privilege,
And ſhew itſelf entirely to the Soul. There

There Truth will be array'd in all its Charms,
Blaze full upon the Mind with cleareſt Ray,
For ever ſtreaming from the Source divine.

Nor Faith, nor Hope ſhou'd lightly be eſteem'd,
Both valuable Graces, but in Rank
Preeminence they yield to Charity;
Which with ſuperior Worth and Luſtre ſhines,
Chief of all Graces, of all Virtues Queen.

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